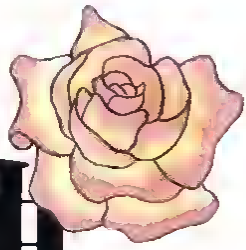

神童

Shindo

Volume 4

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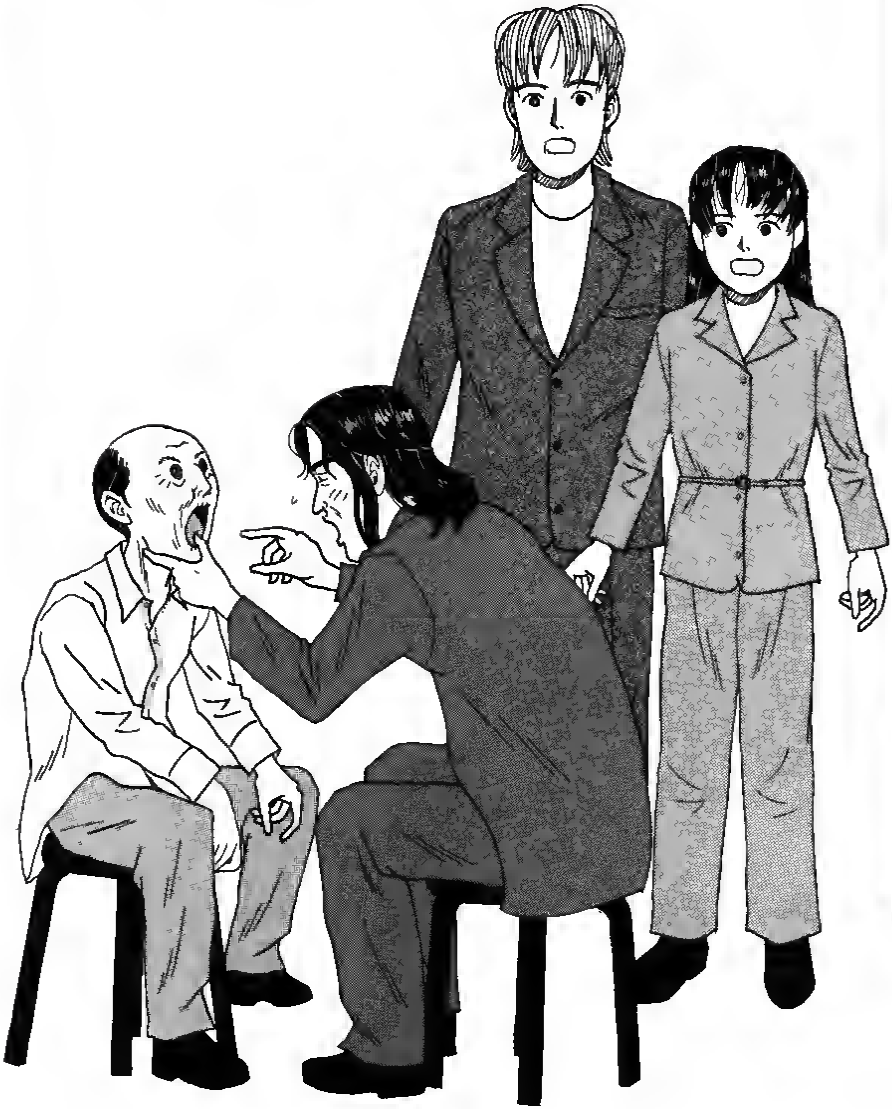
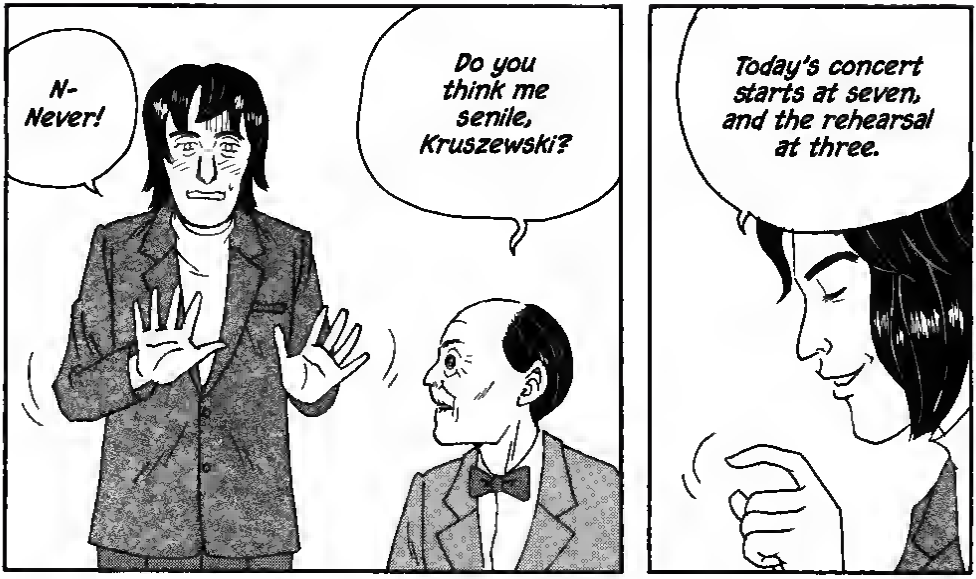
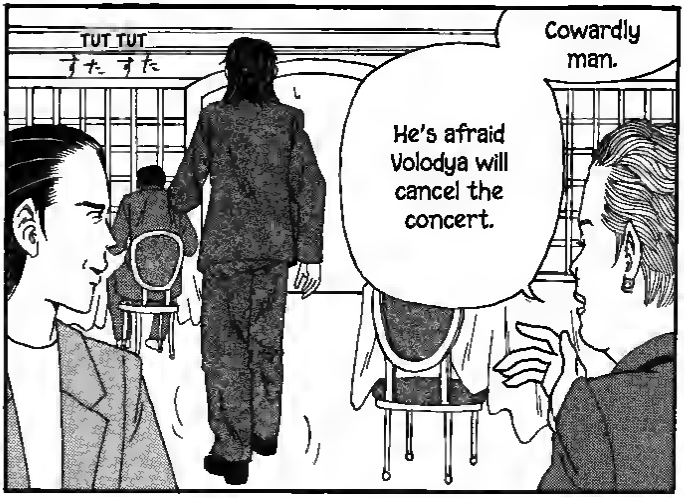
Chapter 35 The Dejection Song

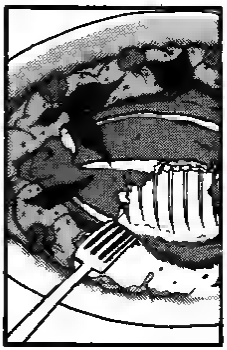


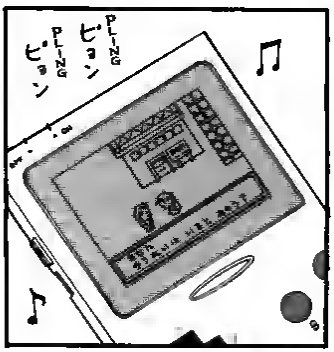
How are you feeling, Maestro?
Hello.
ホッ：PHEW
He's in an extremely good mood.
The maestro bought heaps of souvenirs in Akihabara yesterday.


N-
Never!
Do you think me senile, Kruszewski?
Today's concert starts at seven, and the rehearsal at three.


TUT TUT
すた すた
Cowardly man.
He's afraid Volodya will cancel the concert.

Excuse me.

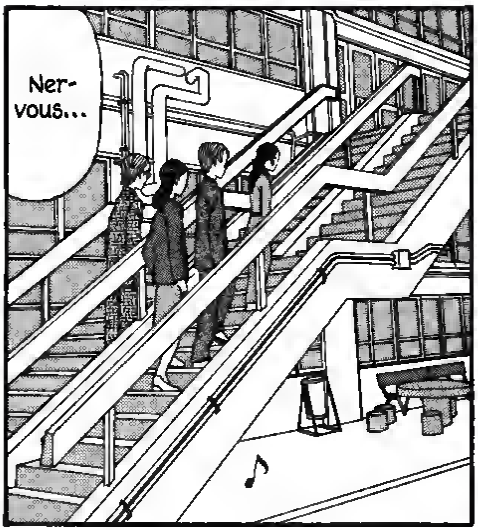



PI-NG
ピョン
PI-NG
ピョン

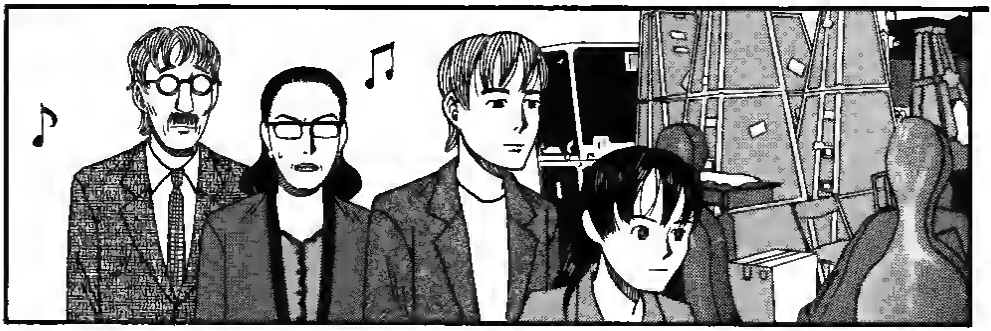
くすくすくす
HEE HEE HEE
PINGALING
ピョロラリン
PINGALING
ピョロラリン

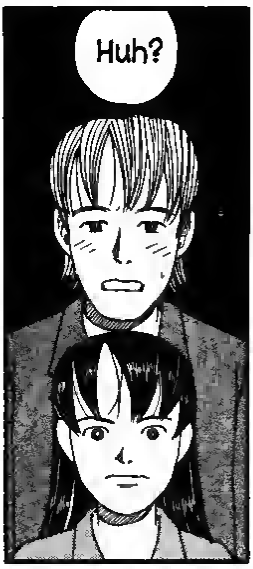
The factory's this way.
So they have a rehearsal hall inside the factory.
The Dai Nippon Symphony Orchestra is sponsored by a railway company.
Fac-tory?
This is it.

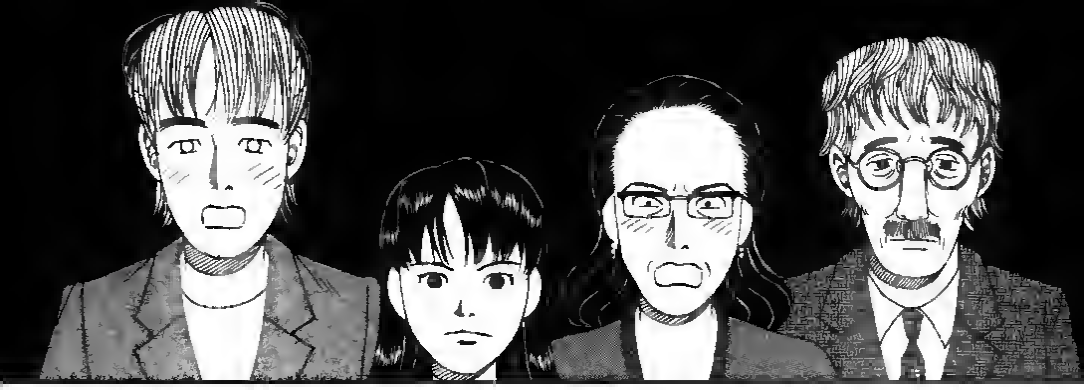
...will do fine.
Uta...
No.
Have you ever played with an orchestra?
Uta...
...just for playing piano?
I can get paid...
Really?
...and bring in a lot of money!
Her playing will astound everyone...
Isn't that all what *you* want, ma'am?
Wear name brand clothing, travel the world... even meet celebrities!
We could get back the Steinway! Live in a big house again!
Of course!


Ner-
vous...

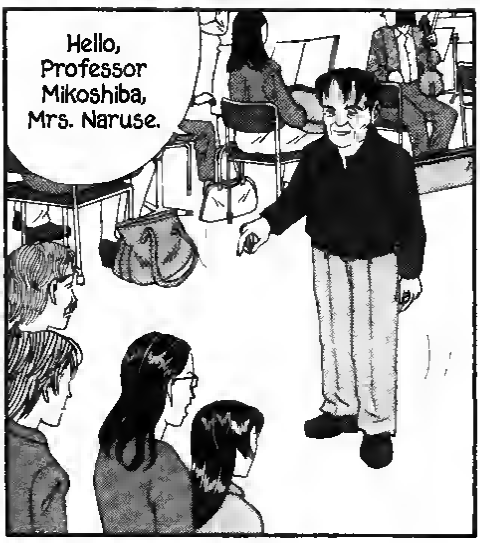
They're
playing!



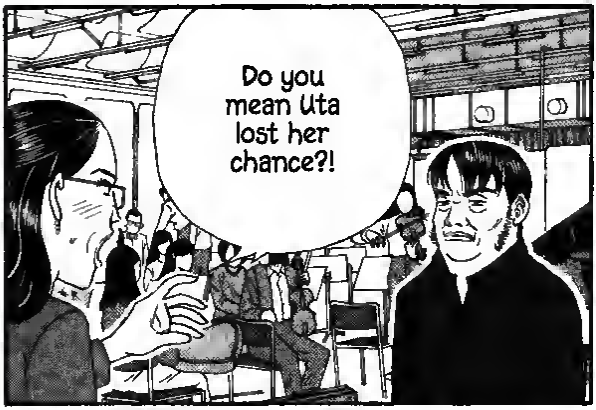

Huh?

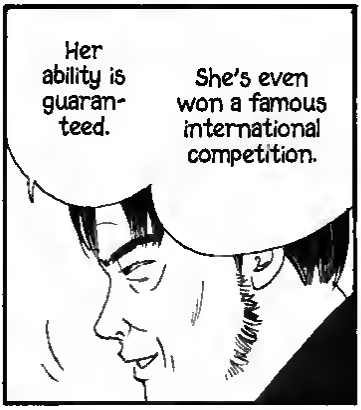


... that plans have changed.
I'm sorry to say...

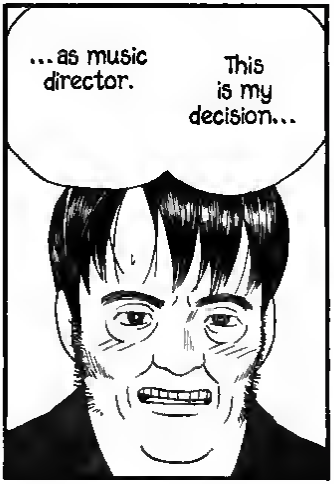

Hello, Professor Mikoshiba, Mrs. Naruse.

...after you skipped out on the rehearsal.
I heard her playing...


Do you mean Uta lost her chance?!

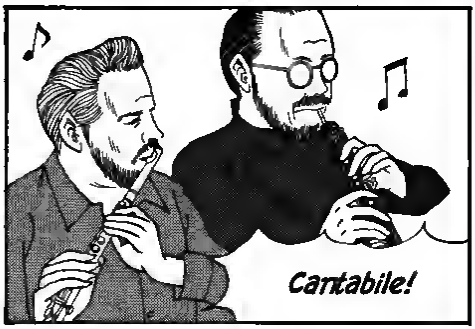

Her ability is guaranteed.
She's even won a famous international competition.

It can't be overturned.


...as music director.
This is my decision...

Professor Mikoshiba.
Uta and I practiced for this–
What about what you told me on the phone?
...merely because you "assured" me of her skill.
I can't believe in your pianist...
You're a figure of the past.

Sir, there's a part I want your help with.
Uta!
Stop!
When you're drunk, all you care about is women's butts!
You old fart!
I bet you picked her for her boobs!
Uta!
Go home.
くるっ
FWIP
Uta!
Creeper!
Perv!

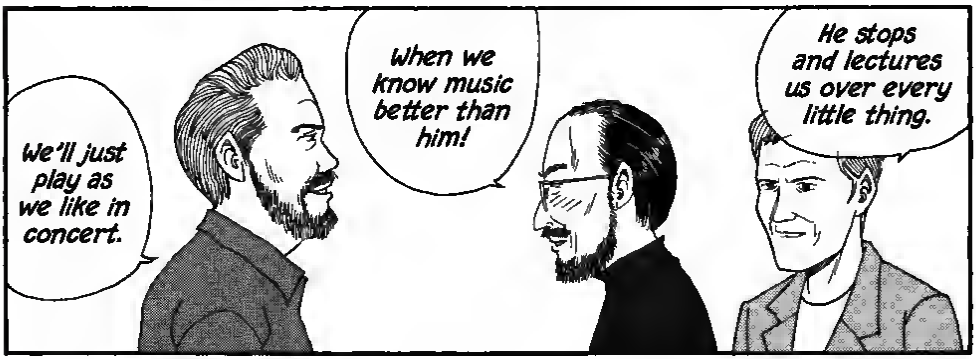

Cantabile!

Like a Russian church choir...

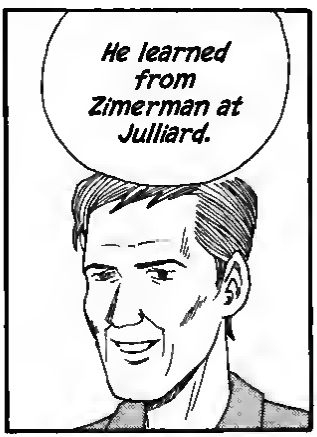
Use the soft part of your fingers for vibrato!
A soft tone here...
That part...
...one more time.
Match the vibrato.
Oboes.
...

Don't be like that, Professor.
Young people these days!

Ha!
"Match the vibrato," he says!

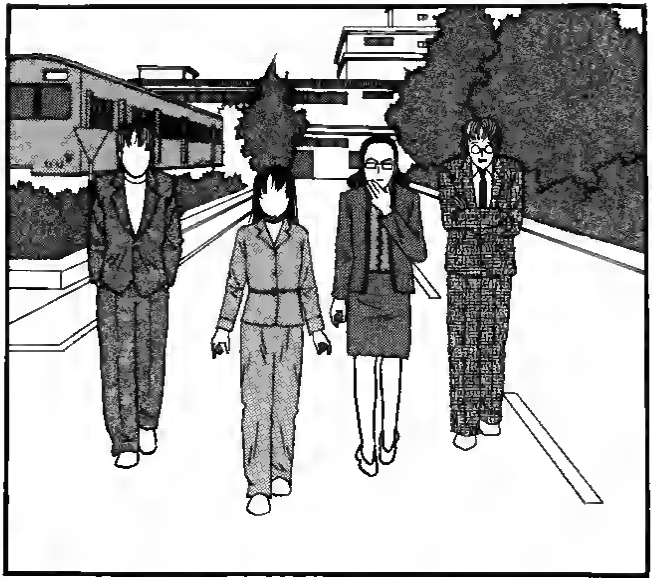

We'll just play as we like in concert.
When we know music better than him!
He stops and lectures us over every little thing.

Good one!
Wasn't Zimerman your student?


He learned from Zimerman at Julliard.

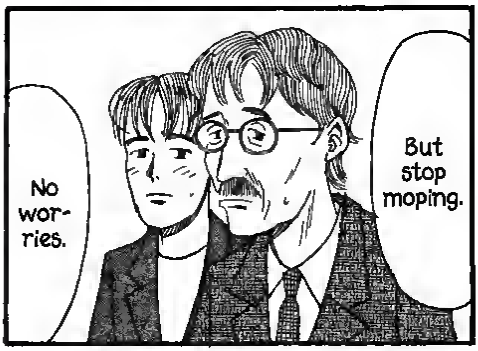
I heard he lured Lobkowicz in by mentioning Japan's amazing toys and mouth-watering parfaits.
That Kruszewski! The way he tricked Lobkowicz into coming along to Japan doesn't sit well with me.
He wants to exploit Lobkowicz's fame.
Hey! Big news!
He's already backstage, though.
Lobkowicz has a reputation for cancellations. He may not actually come to the concert.
I knew it!
Lobkowicz is having a fit in his dressing room!

Good thing I don't gotta perform with him. I didn't *feel* like it.



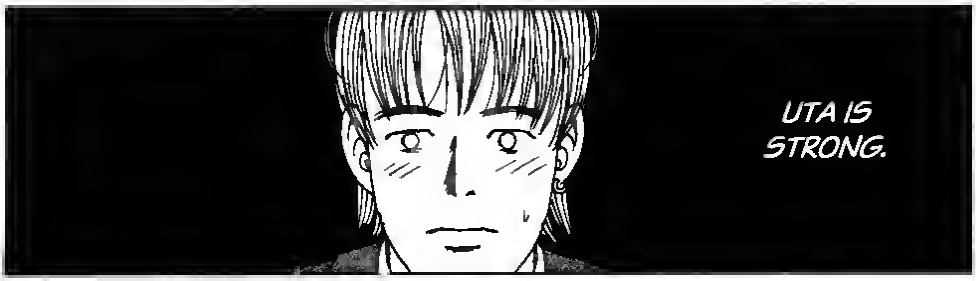
You're the one crying!
Here, cry into my chest!
ギュウ
SQUEEZE

You don't have to pretend!
Oh, Uta!

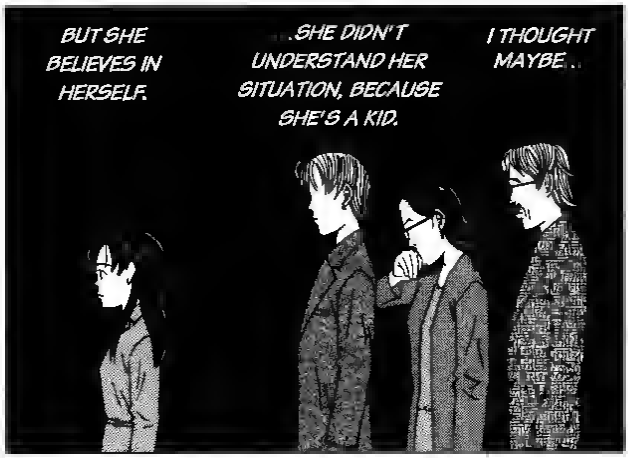

No worries.
But stop moping.

... that he made me look stupid.
It does piss me off...

...begging me to play with his orchestra.
Before long, he'll be on his hands and knees...

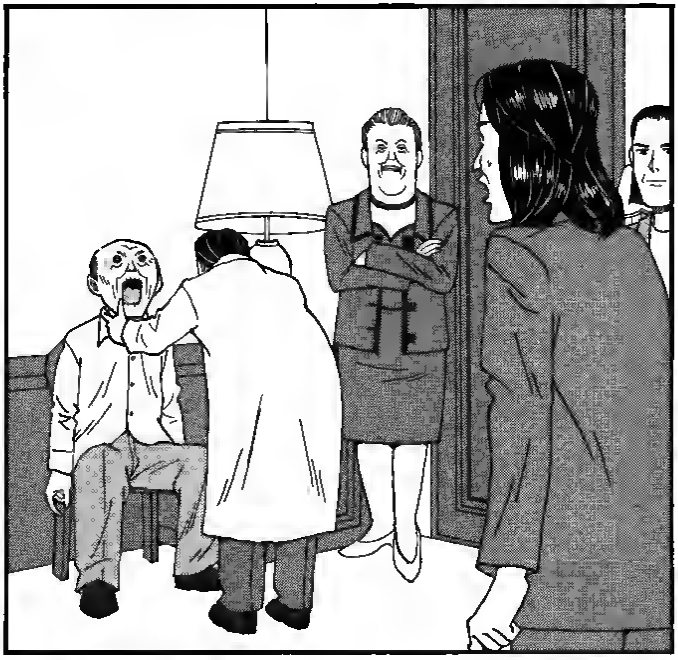

UTA IS STRONG.

THE WORLD WON'T BE ABLE TO IGNORE HER.

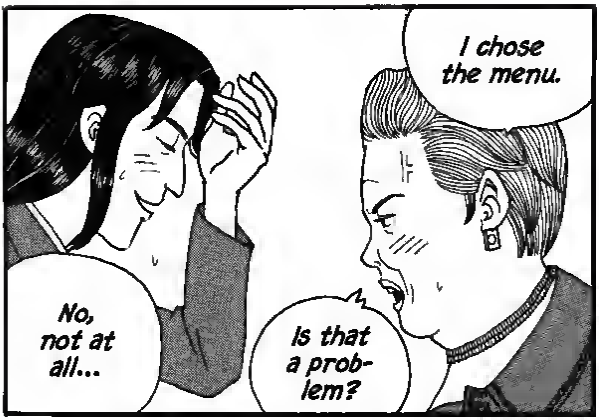

BUT SHE BELIEVES IN HERSELF.
...SHE DIDN'T UNDERSTAND HER SITUATION, BECAUSE SHE'S A KID.
I THOUGHT MAYBE...

What's going on, Maestro?!

A fish bone's stuck in his throat. He says he won't play today.
A fish bone!



A fish bone! Aaargh!
Can't something be done about it? It's just a fish bone!


I chose the menu.
No, not at all...
Is that a problem?

Why did the hotel have to serve fish, of all things?!

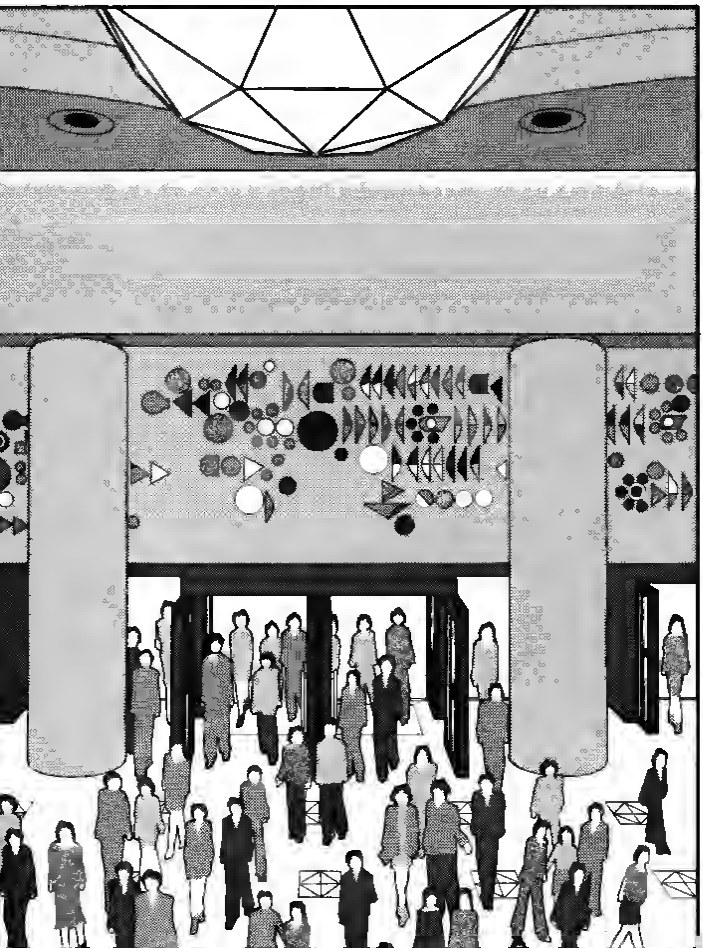
U-TA
MUTTER
MUTTER

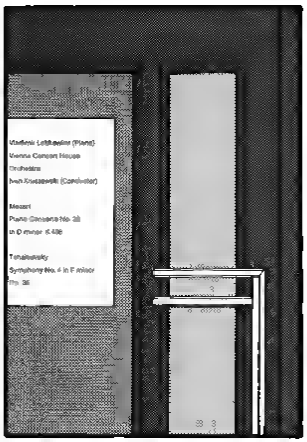
MUTTER

He wants Uta to play as his substitute.
MUTTER
MUTTER
MUTTER

...
Well? What's he saying?

Chapter 36 The Concentration Song





Vladimir Lobkowicz (Piano)
Vienna Concert House
Orchestra
Ivan Kruszewski (Conductor)

Mozart
Piano Concerto No. 20
in D minor K.466

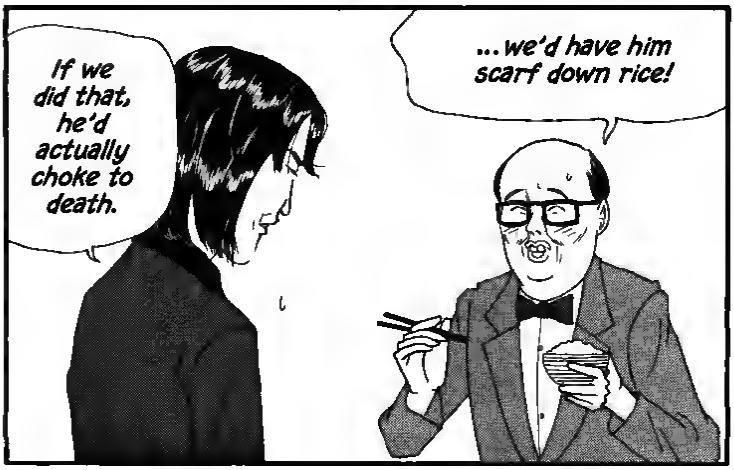
Tchaikovsky
Symphony No. 4 in F minor
Op. 36

Did you contact Uta Naruse, the pianist?
We're trying.

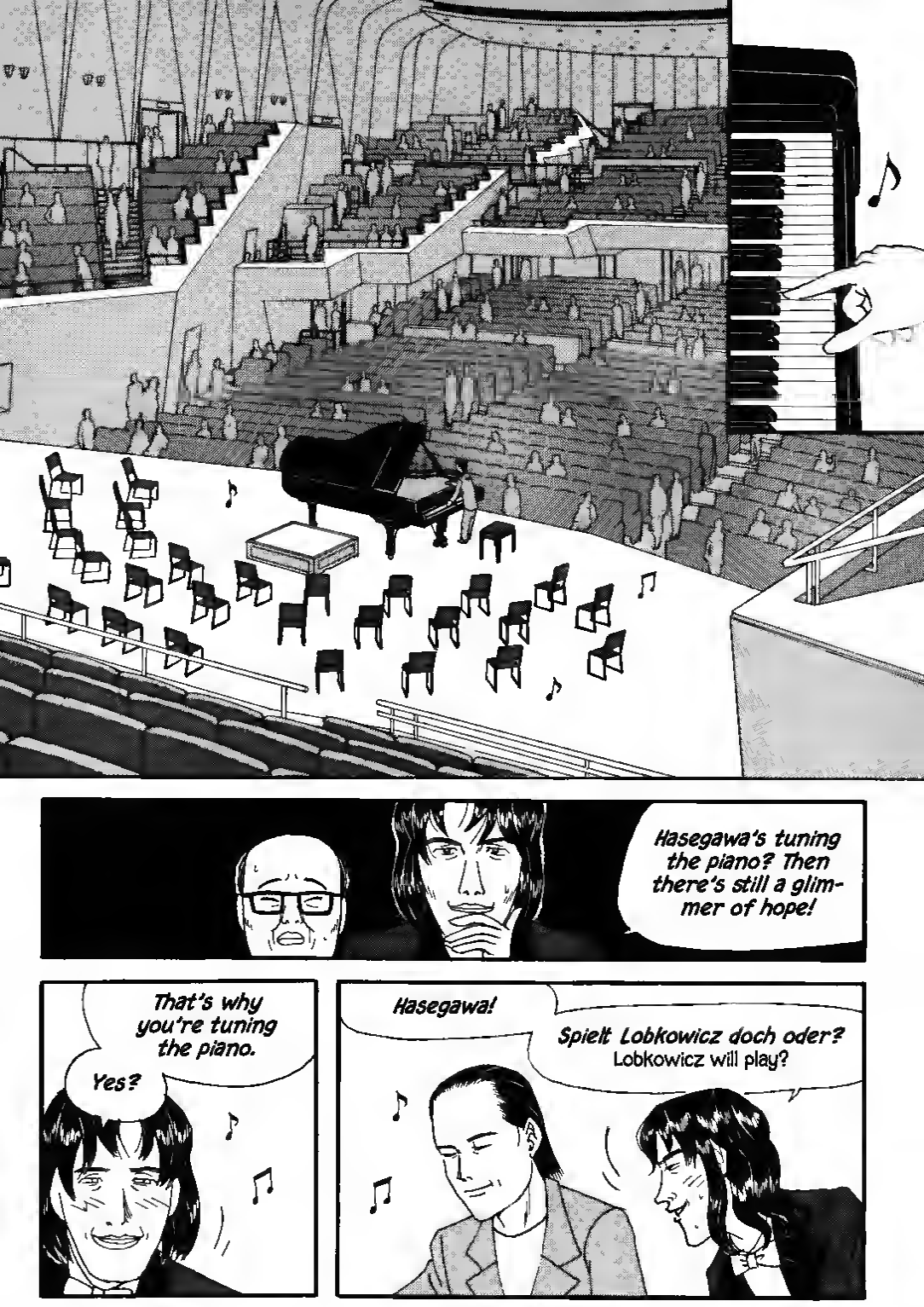
The audience is arriving.

Dammit! There must be a way out of this!

A fish bone in his throat?

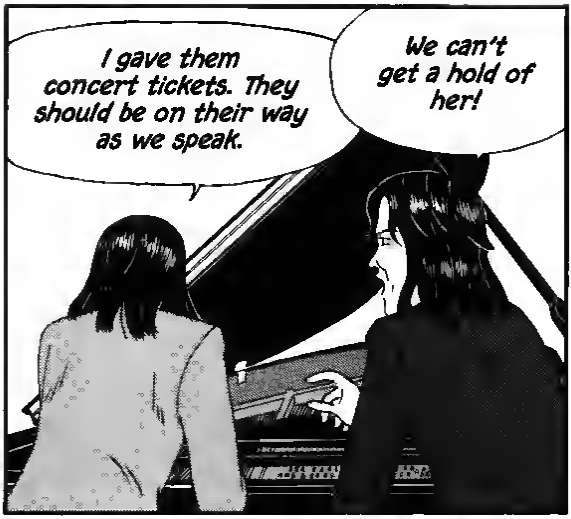

If we did that, he'd actually choke to death.
...we'd have him scarf down rice!

According to Japanese tradition...


Hasegawa's tuning the piano? Then there's still a glimmer of hope!
That's why you're tuning the piano.
Yes?
Hasegawa!
Spielt Lobkowicz doch oder?
Lobkowicz will play?

Not a chance!

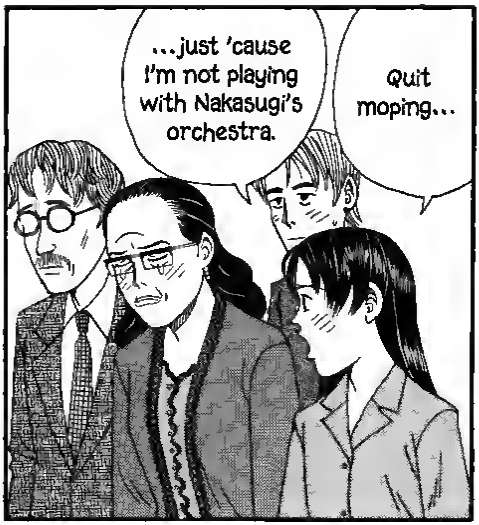
Lobkowicz won't play.


I gave them concert tickets. They should be on their way as we speak.
We can't get a hold of her!

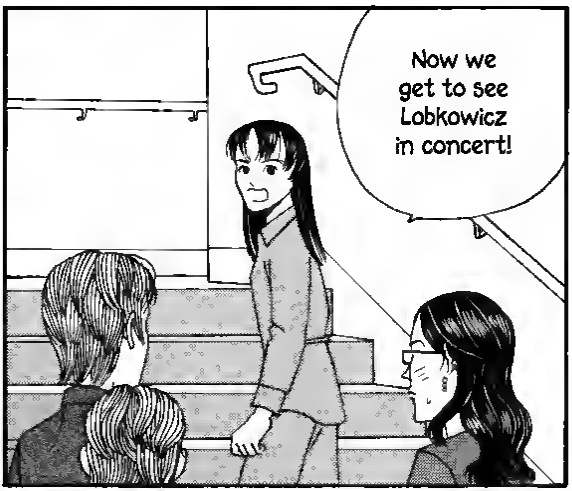
Why didn't you say so sooner?!

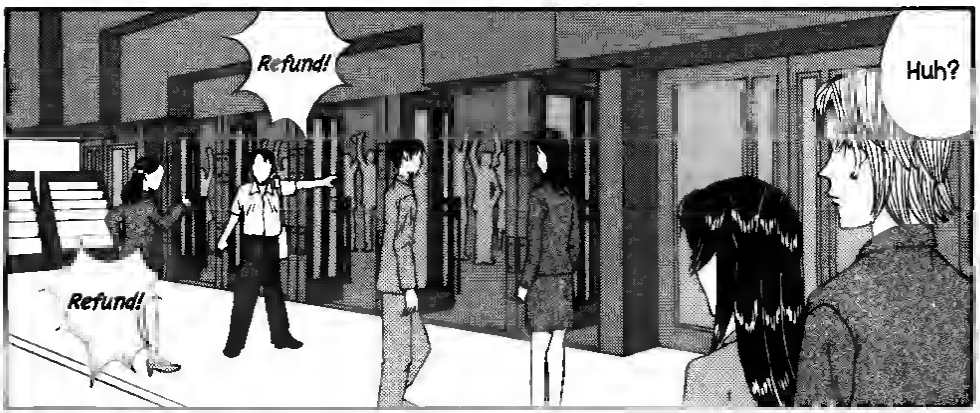
I'm setting the piano up for Uta.
Ack.
CLACK

They say he's in top form in front of an audience!
That's Kruszewski, the conductor!
Ivan!
THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING.
He looked like he was in a panic.
...for cancellations.
This is why Lobkowicz is famous...
DUE TO A SUDDEN ILLNESS, MR. LOBKOWICZ WILL BE REPLACED BY A SUBSTITUTE PIANIST TODAY.
えっ
WHAAAT?
I want my money back!
Ridiculous! I paid a thousand dollars to hear Lobkowicz play!

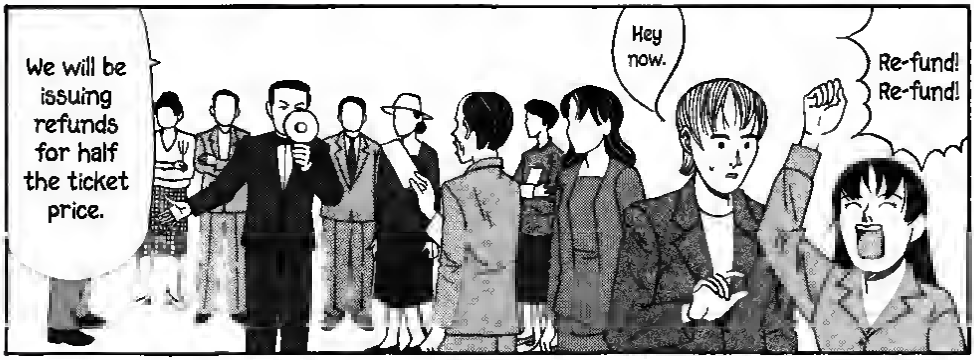

...just 'cause I'm not playing with Nakasugi's orchestra.
Quit moping...

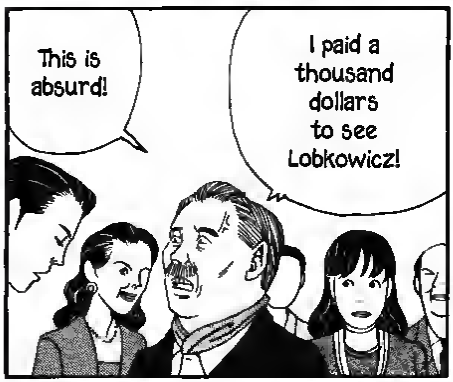
...him play again.
I'm real excited to hear...


Now we get to see Lobkowicz in concert!


Refund!
Refund!
Huh?

Re-fund!
Re-fund!
Dunno, but...
What's that about?
Re-fund!
Re-fund!

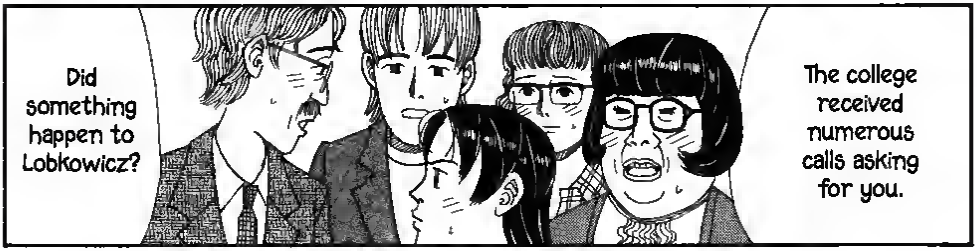

We will be issuing refunds for half the ticket price.
Hey now.
Re-fund!
Re-fund!

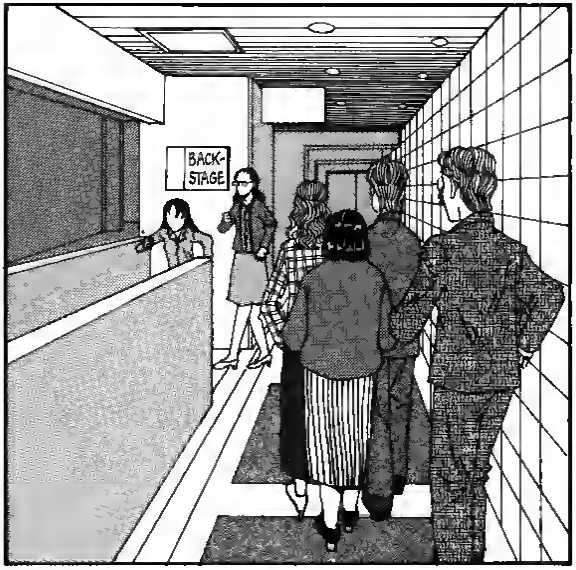

This is absurd!
I paid a thousand dollars to see Lobkowicz!

Oh, well...
Half the price?

Why?
You need to go back-stage right now.

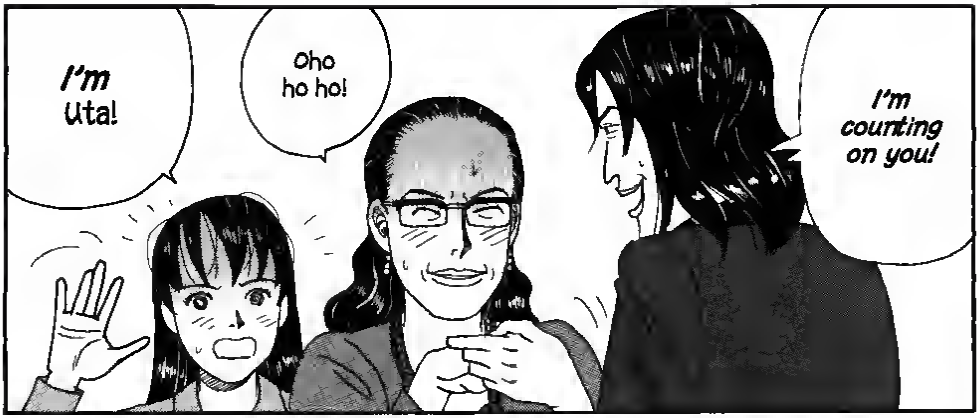
Professor Katsura! Kanon!
Uta-chan, Professor! There you are!


Did something happen to Lobkowicz?
The college received numerous calls asking for you.


BACK-STAGE

Don't go off on your own, Uta!
Refund! Refund!

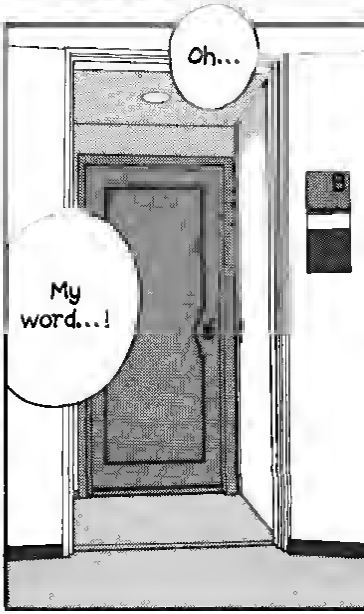
He's coming this way!
That's Kruszewski! He's all the rage right now!
We get to go backstage!
How lucky that you know Lobkowicz.
THUD
THUD
Sie sind Uta, nicht wahr?
You must be Miss Uta!
Können Sie d-moll Konzert von Mozart spielen?
Can you play Mozart's Piano Concerto in D minor?
CLASP

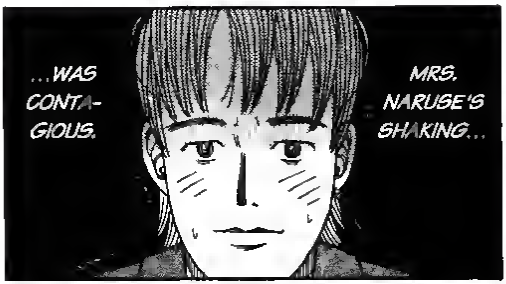

I'm Uta!
Oho ho ho!
I'm counting on you!

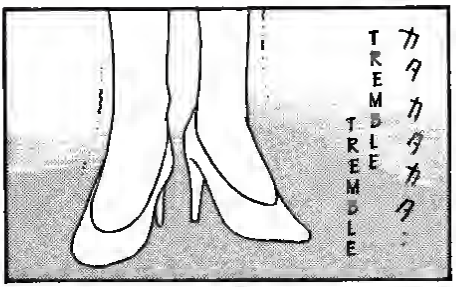
What ?!

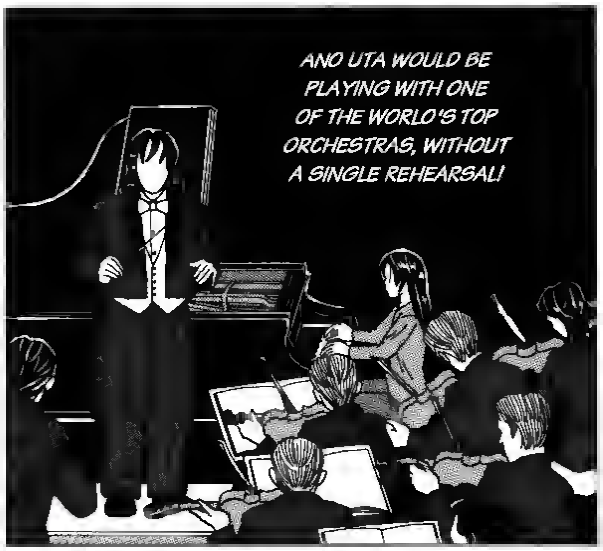
Das... That's...
...ist die mutter! ... the mother!

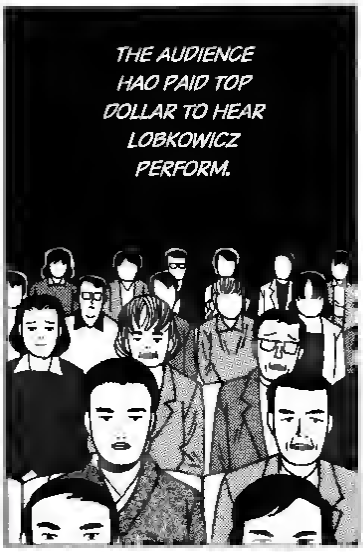
This is so sudden...
Lobkowicz's substitute?

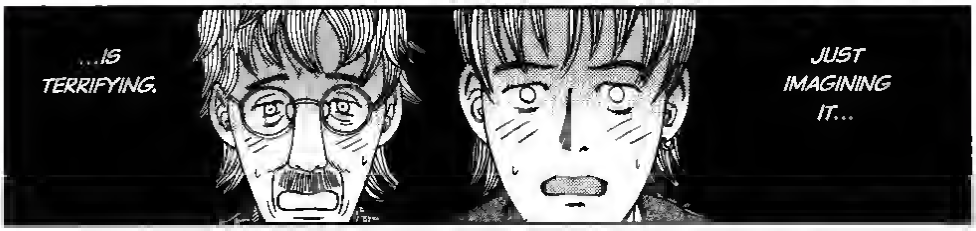

Oh...
My word...!


...WAS CONTA-GIOUS.
MRS. NARUSE'S SHAKING...


カタカタカタ…
TREMBLE
TREMBLE


ANO UTA WOULD BE PLAYING WITH ONE OF THE WORLO'S TOP ORCHESTRAS, WITHOUT A SINGLE REHEARSAL!

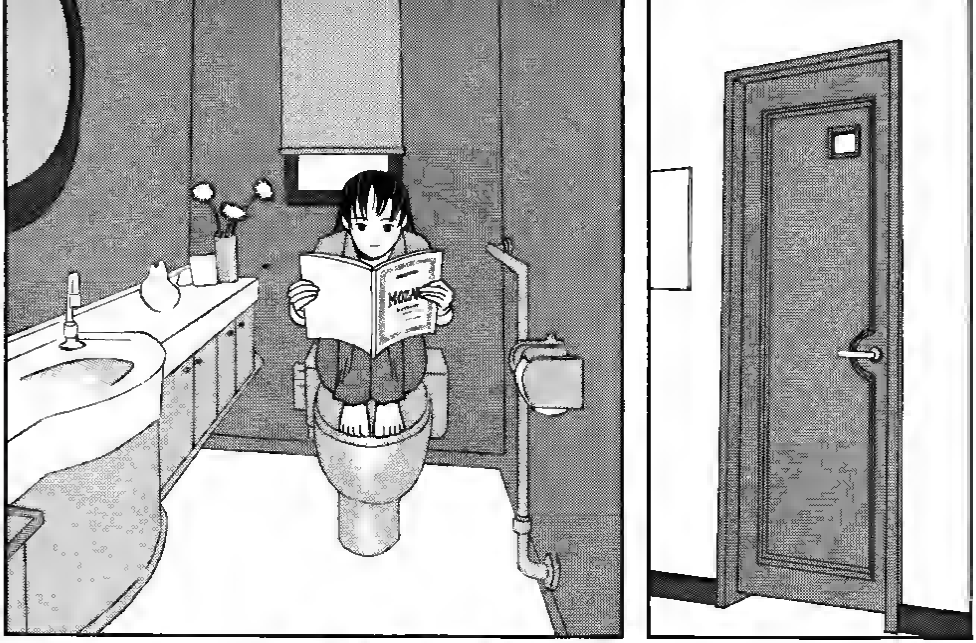
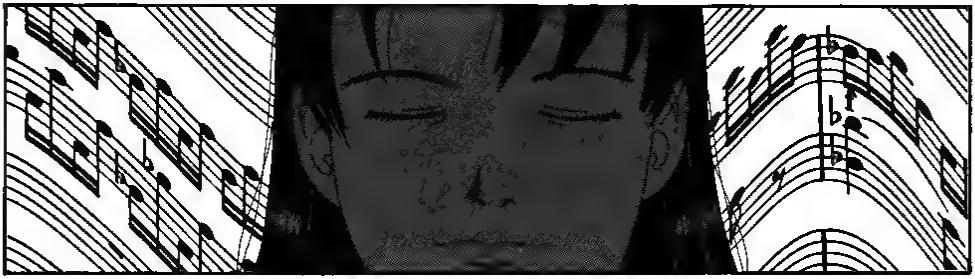

THE AUDIENCE HAO PAID TOP DOLLAR TO HEAR LOBKOWICZ PERFORM.

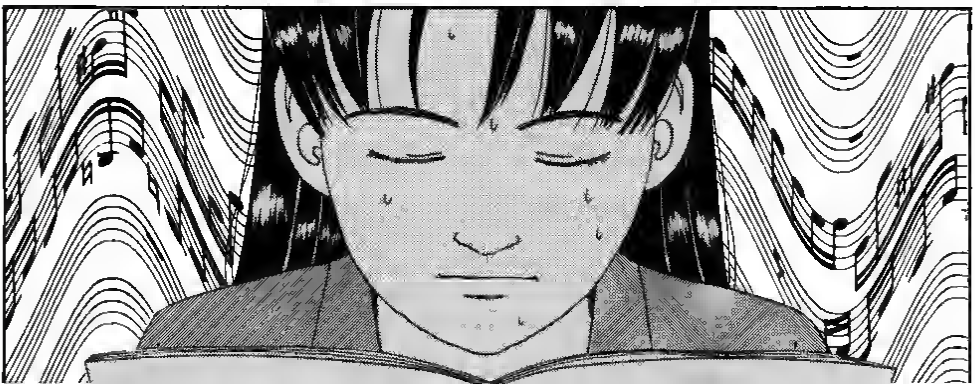

...IS TERRIFYING.
JUST IMAGINING IT...

ひょっ
I'll do it

It's impos-sible!
She can't!

Have you ever practiced that piece?
Uta...
If you want me to play, I'll play!
Lemme see the music.
Gotta pee.
Uta!
Hmm...
MOZART
Huh, this is a great piece!
You don't already know it?

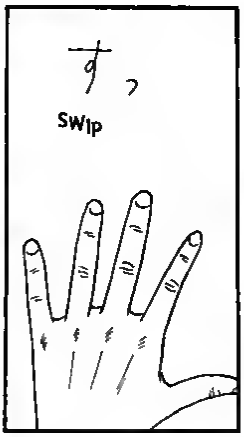

MOCAP




S M
に
I L E
っ

You can't be back here!
Hey, you!
What?

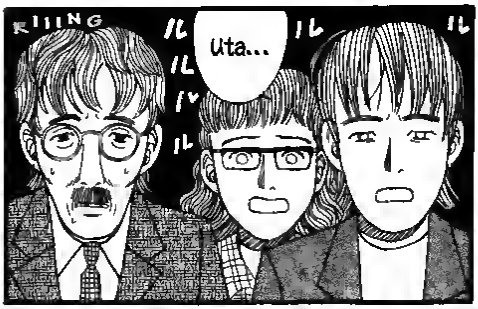
Ah.
Phew, all better.

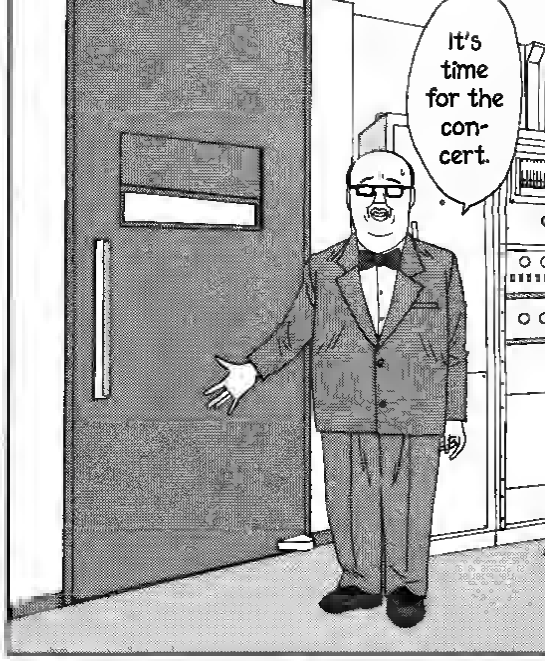

Swip

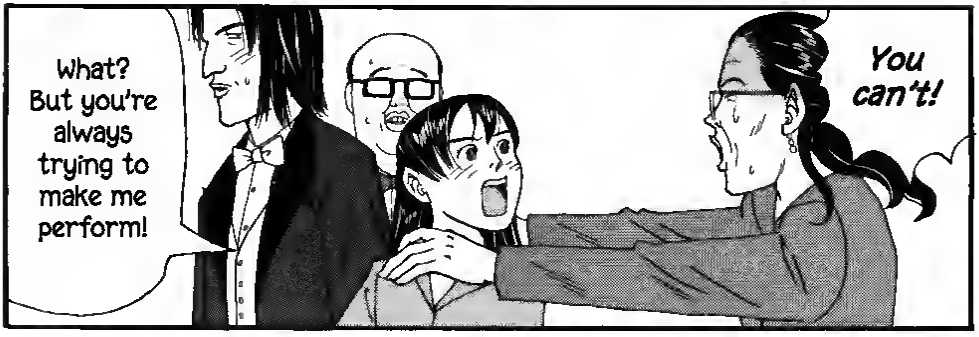
Leggo! I'm performing!
This isn't a game!

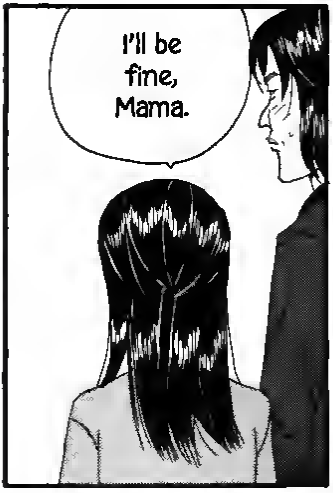
...Lob-kowicz!
Mister...
This is your era now, Uta.
Sure thing!
Are you going to do it?
Uta!

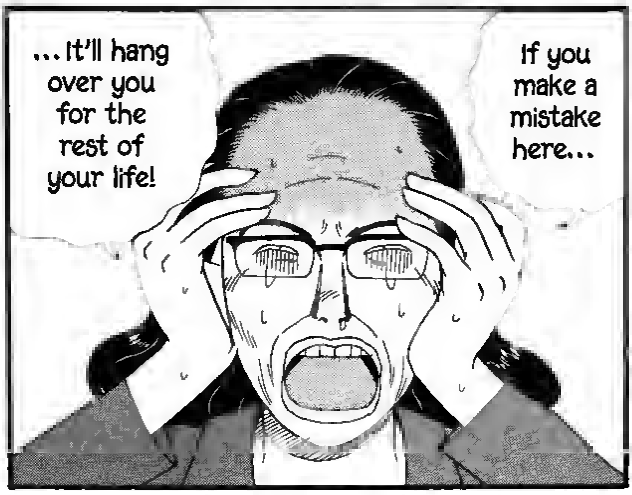
RIIING


RIIING
Uta...


It's time for the concert.

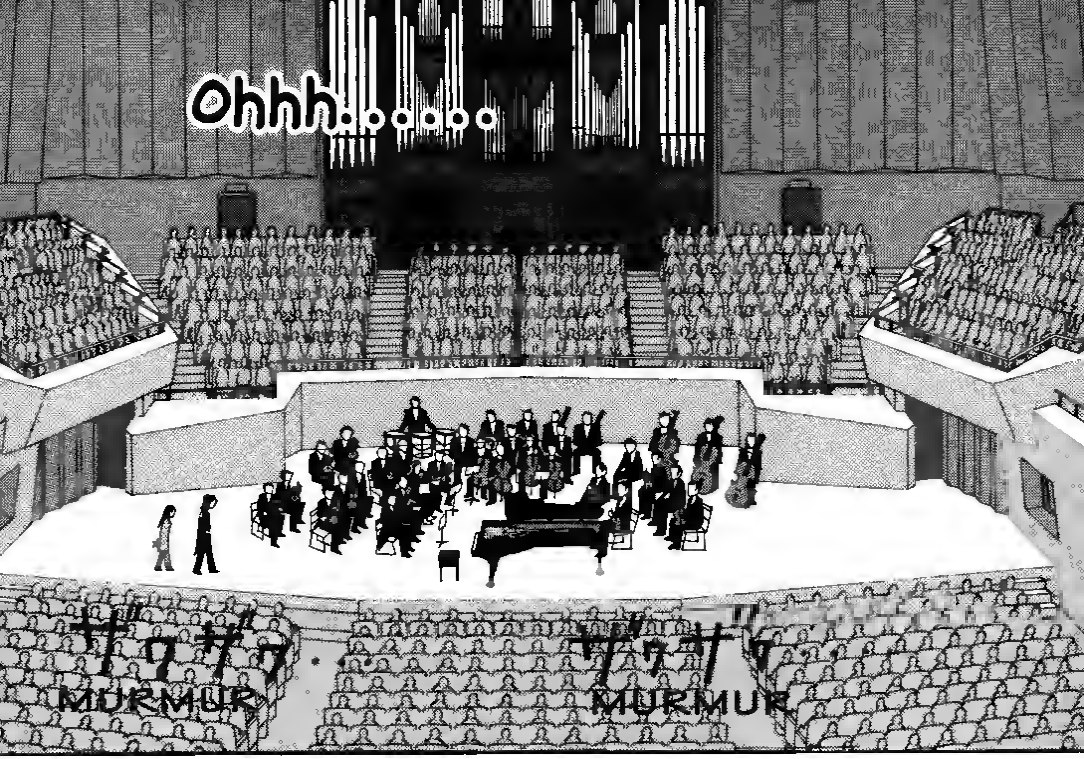

What? But you're always trying to make me perform!
You can't!


I'll be fine, Mama.

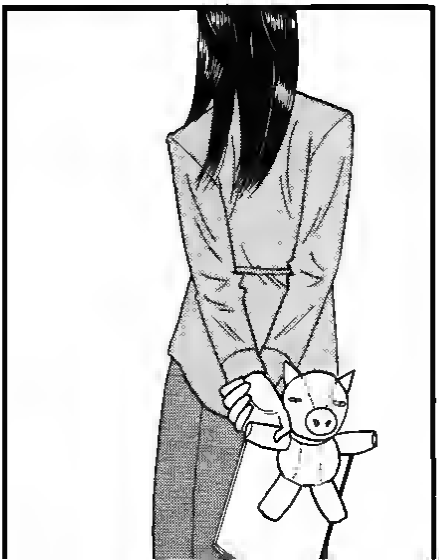

...It'll hang over you for the rest of your life!
If you make a mistake here...

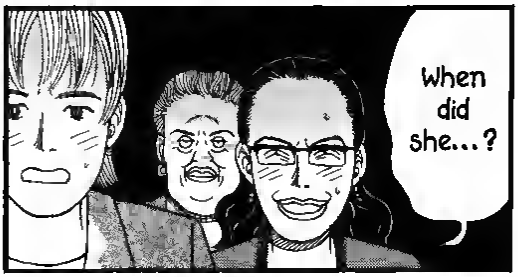
Chapter 36: The Concentration Song • End

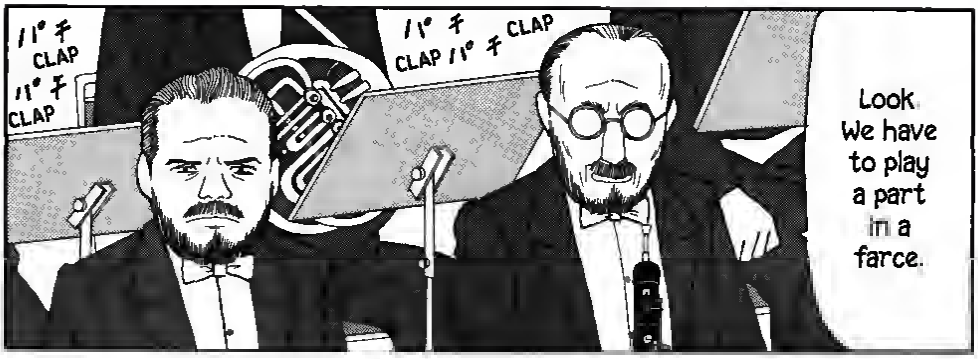
Chapter 37 The Music Song

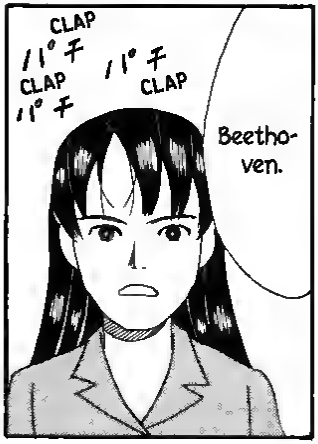

Ohhh.....
ザワザワ
MURMUR
ザワザワ
MURMUR

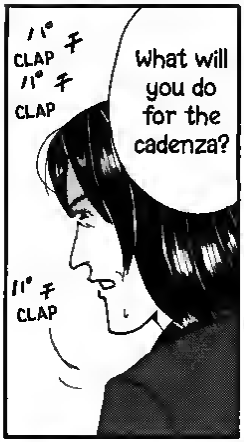
...is a little girl!
Look! Uta Naruse...

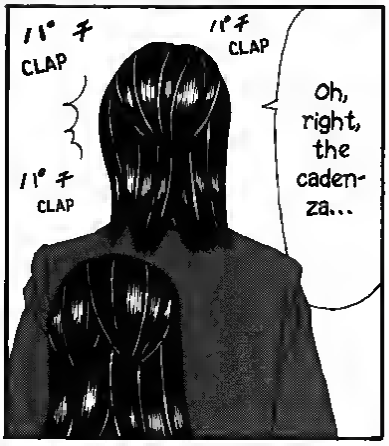



When did she...?


パチ CLAP パチ CLAP
パチ CLAP パチ CLAP
Look. We have to play a part in a farce.

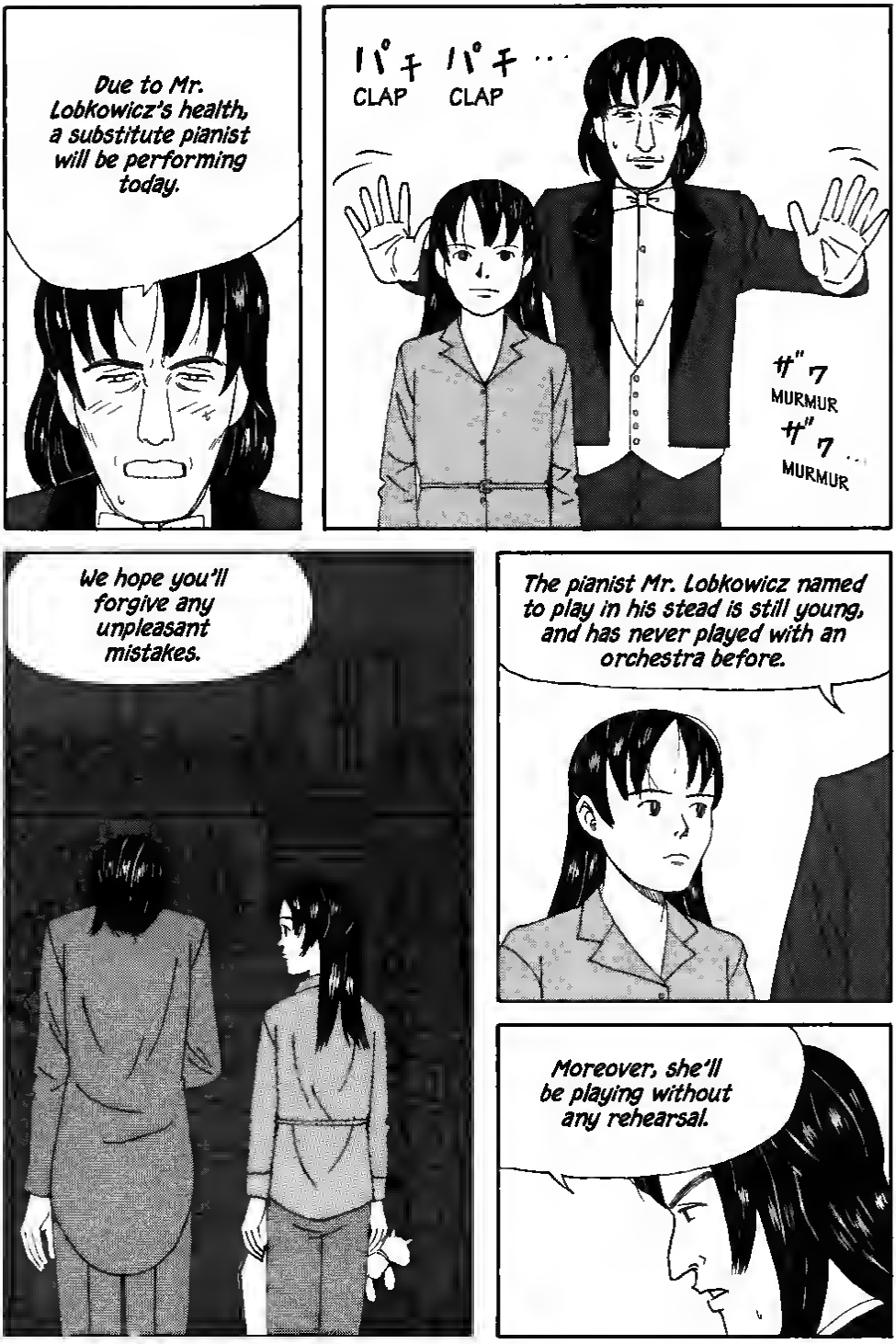

CLAP パチ CLAP パチ CLAP パチ CLAP
Beetho-ven.

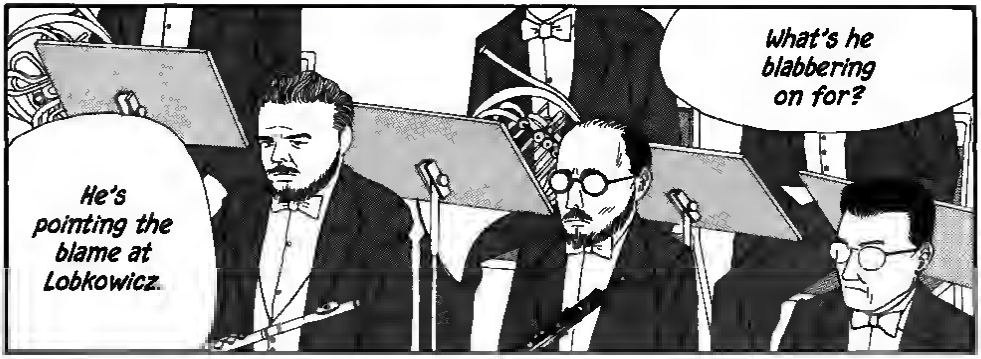

パチ CLAP パチ CLAP
What will you do for the cadenza?
パチ CLAP

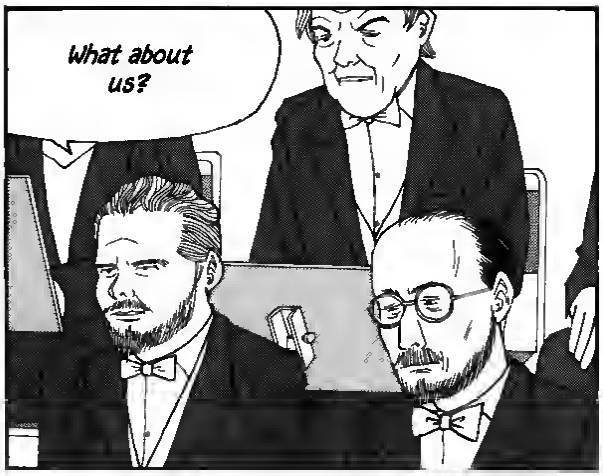

パチ CLAP
パチ CLAP
パチ CLAP
Oh, right, the caden-za...

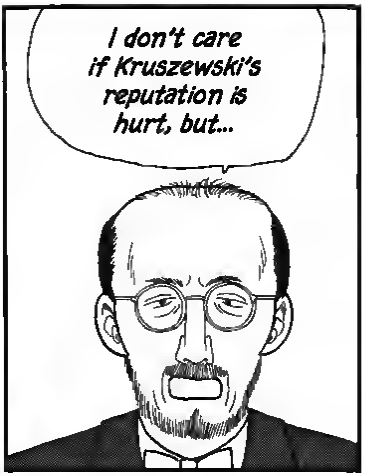
パチ パチ パチ パチ
CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP
ブー BUZZ ブー BUZZ
ヒュー TWEET
ヒュー TWEET

I hope you can play Beethoven...

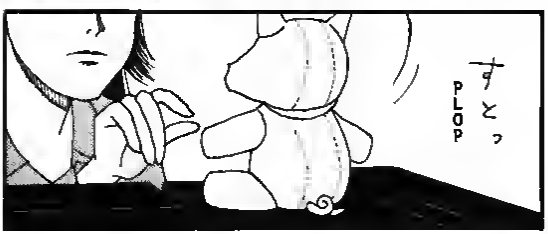

Due to Mr. Lobkowicz's health, a substitute pianist will be performing today.
パチ パチ…
CLAP CLAP
ザワ
MURMUR
ザワ…
MURMUR
We hope you'll forgive any unpleasant mistakes.
The pianist Mr. Lobkowicz named to play in his stead is still young, and has never played with an orchestra before.
Moreover, she'll be playing without any rehearsal.

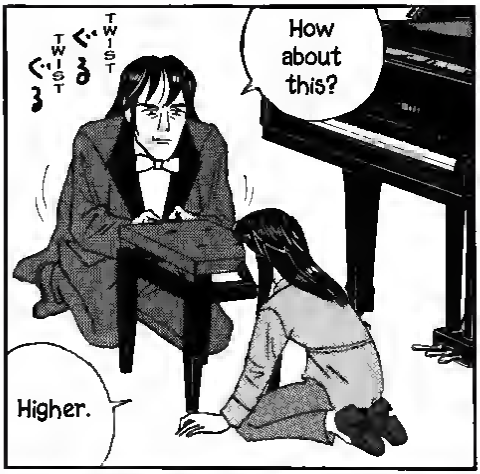

What's he blabbering on for?
He's pointing the blame at Lobkowicz.

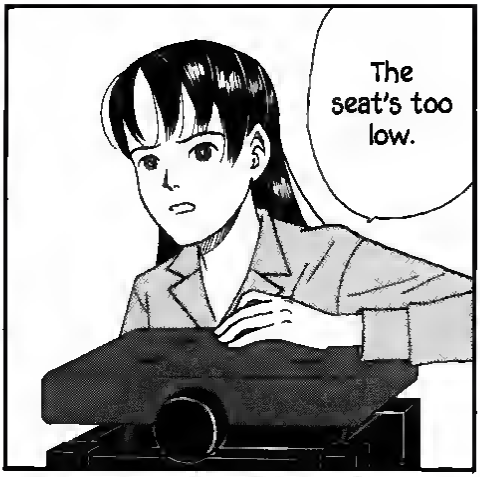

What about us?


I don't care if Kruszewski's reputation is hurt, but...

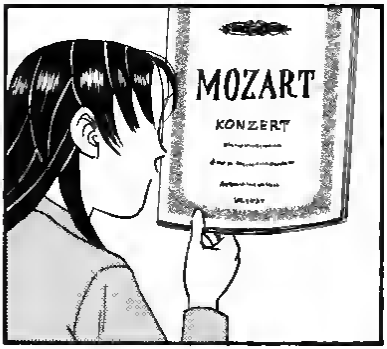
カ
JERK
Hold on.

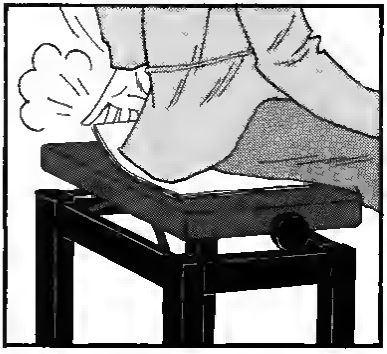

すとっ
PLOP


TWIST
TWIST
TWIST
How about this?
Higher.

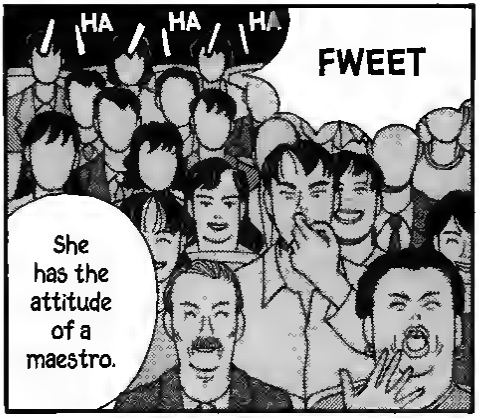

The seat's too low.

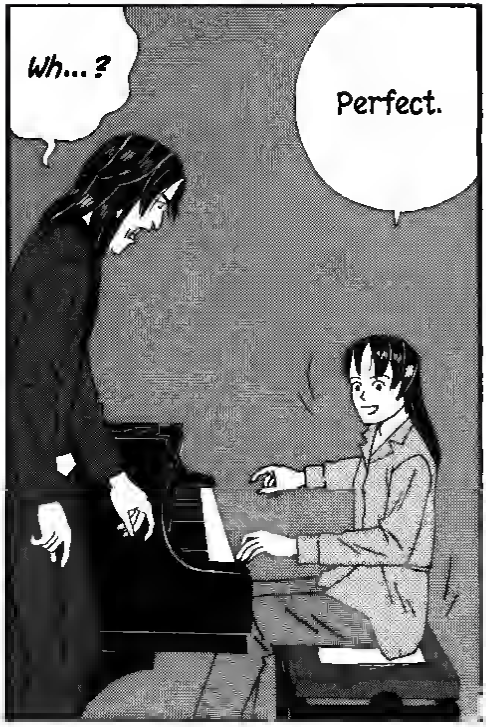
クスクスクスクスクスクスクスクス
HA HA HA HA HA HA


MOZART
KONZERT



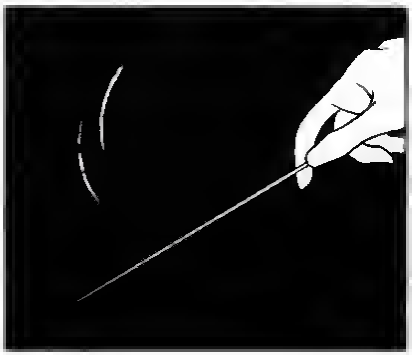
This is as high as it goes.
Hmm.

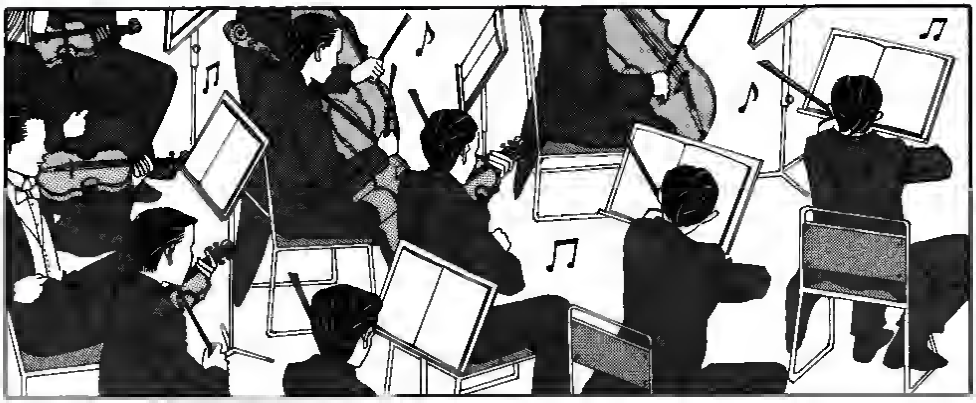

HA HA HA
FWEET
She has the attitude of a maestro.

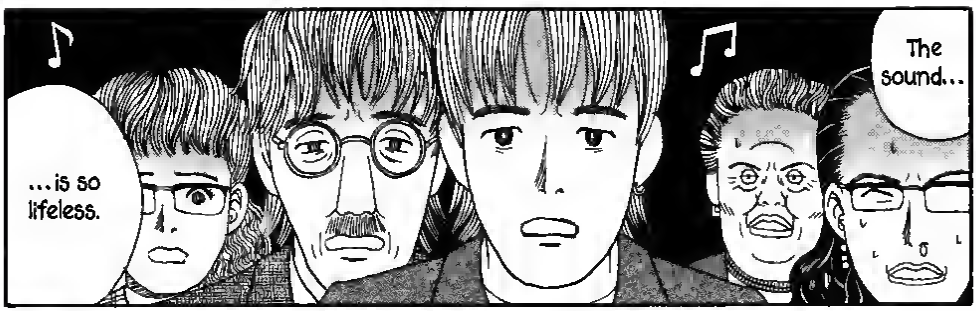

Wh...?
Perfect.

You're playing from memory?!

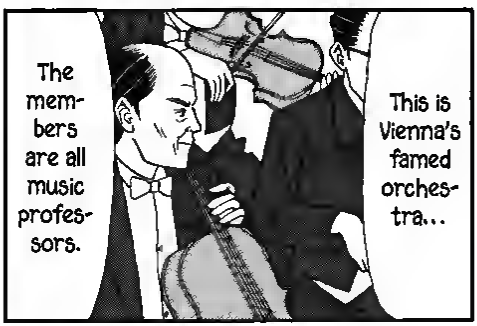
You can start now.

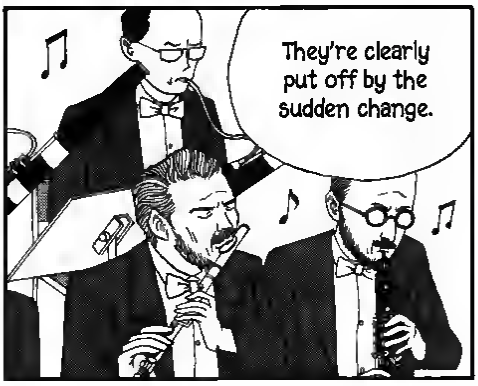


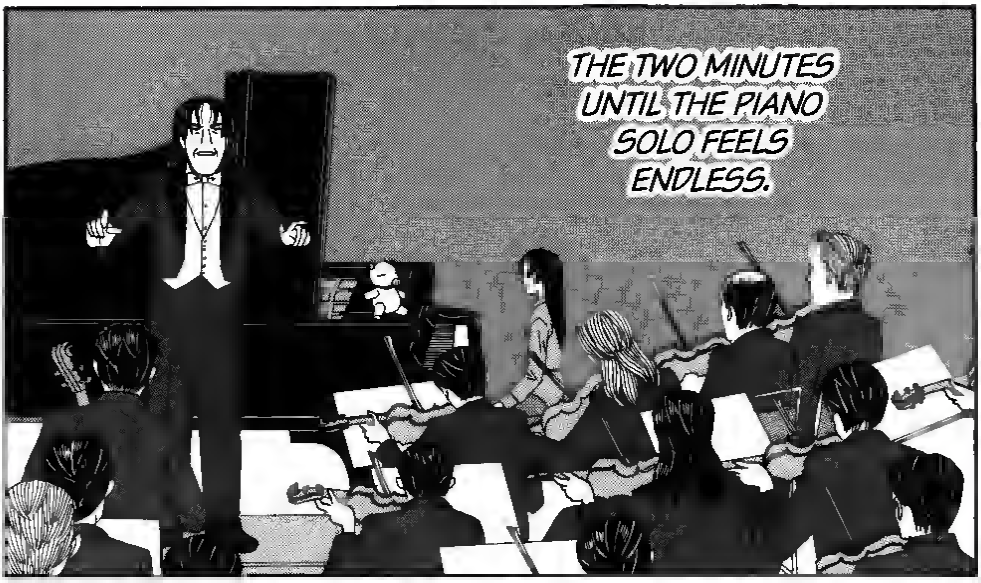


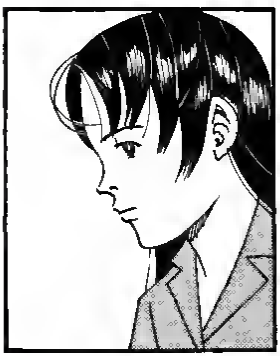

...is so lifeless.
The sound...

At this rate, the concert will be a flop...
...no matter how hard Uta tries.


The members are all music professors.
This is Vienna's famed orchestra...


They're clearly put off by the sudden change.


THE TWO MINUTES
UNTIL THE PIANO
SOLO FEELS
ENDLESS.

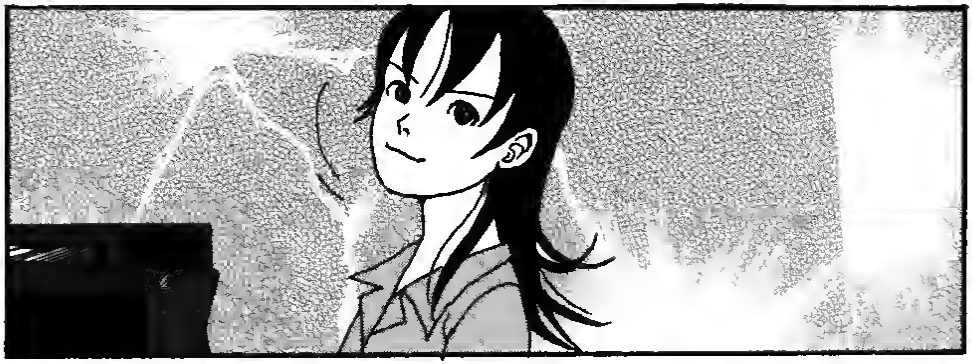


ジャン
JAAHN

...STRUCK THE AUDIENCE'S HEART.
THE STREAM OF DROPLETS THAT GUSHED OUT FROM BETWEEN THE ROCKS...
...MOZART'S MUSIC.
YET IT WAS UNDENI-ABLY...
LIKE IT HAD BEEN BORN ON THAT SPOT.
A SOUND THAT HAD NEVER BEEN HEARD BEFORE.

THE TIM-
PANIST
DROPPED
HIS
STICKS.
THE
CONCERT
MASTER
UNCON-
SCIOUSLY
SAT
DOWN.

Pro-
fessor!
Right.
He's re-
sponding
to the
piano
with an
incredible
sound!
I
WILL
TOO.



WATCH MY DIREC-TION!
THAT'S NOT MY TEMPO!

...BY THE PIANO!
THEY'RE BEING DIRECTED...

A CADENZA...

What will she do for the cadenza?

The caden-za...

BUT IN MODERN TIMES, MOST PERFORMERS PLAY A WRITTEN CADENZA.

BEETHOVEN WROTE A FAMOUS CADENZA FOR MOZART'S PIANO CONCERTO NO. 20.

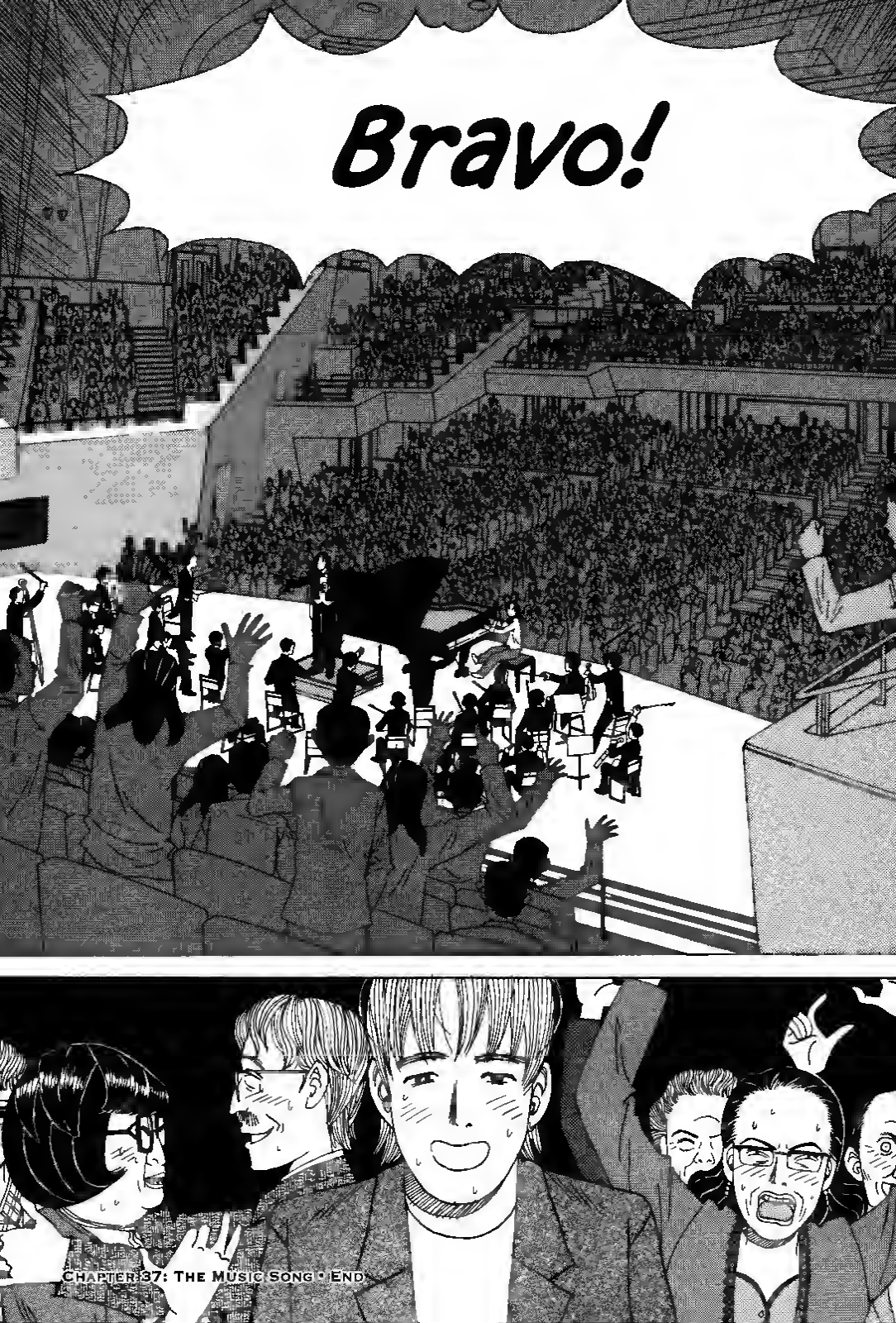
BACK IN MOZART'S TIME, THE SOLOIST WOULD GIVE A MASTERFUL PERFORMANCE ON THE SPOT.

...IS A PORTION NEAR THE END OF A MOVEMENT DURING WHICH THE PIANIST PLAYS AN IMPROVISED SOLO.

The cadenza...

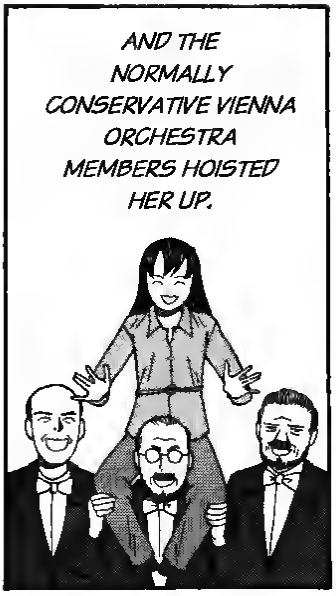
UTA DIDN'T PLAY BEETHOVEN.
FOR TEN LONG MINUTES, SHE PLAYED A FUGUE BASED ON MOZART'S THEME.
SHE IMPROVISED.
This might be how Mozart himself played!
Mozart...

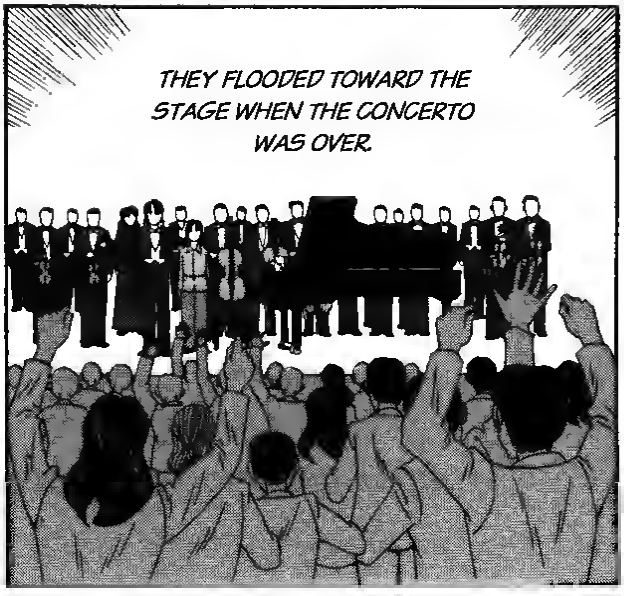
ンッ
JAAAHNNN
ャアアアン

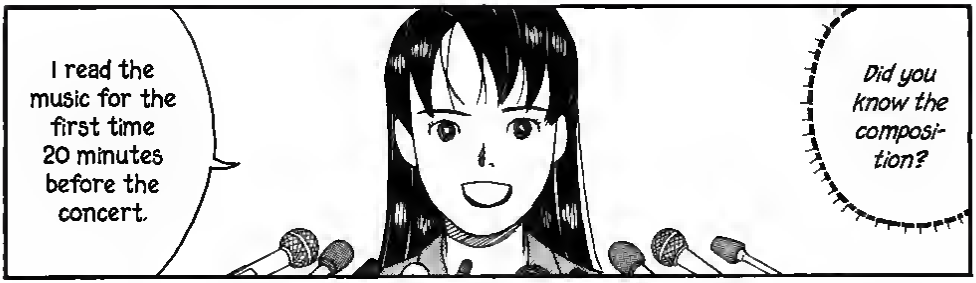

Bravo!

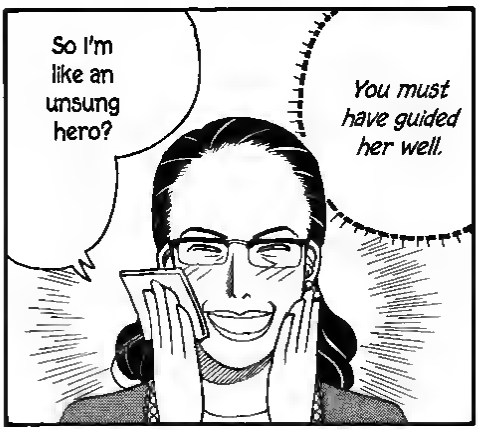
Chapter 38 The Passing By Song

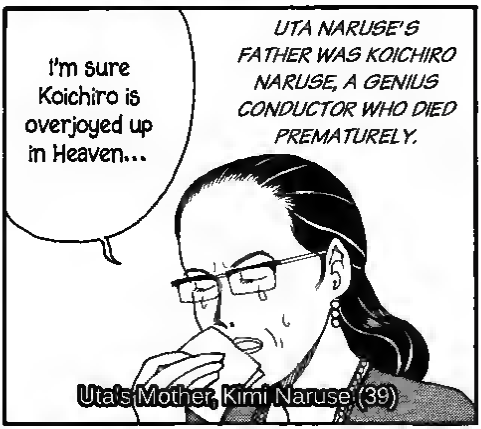
WITH EACH MOVEMENT, THE AUDIENCE GREW MORE EXHILARATED.
UTA RECEIVED AN UNPRECEDENTED STANDING OVATION.
WHEN THE FIRST MOVEMENT ENDED, THE CONCERT HALL WAS ENVELOPED BY A STRANGE EXCITEMENT.

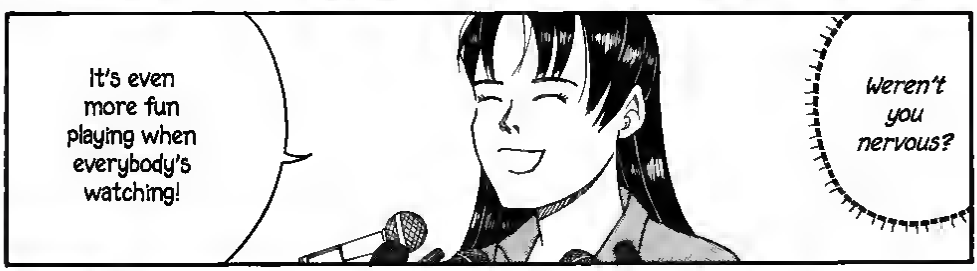

AND THE NORMALLY CONSERVATIVE VIENNA ORCHESTRA MEMBERS HOISTED HER UP.


THEY FLOODED TOWARD THE STAGE WHEN THE CONCERTO WAS OVER.


I read the music for the first time 20 minutes before the concert.
Did you know the composition?

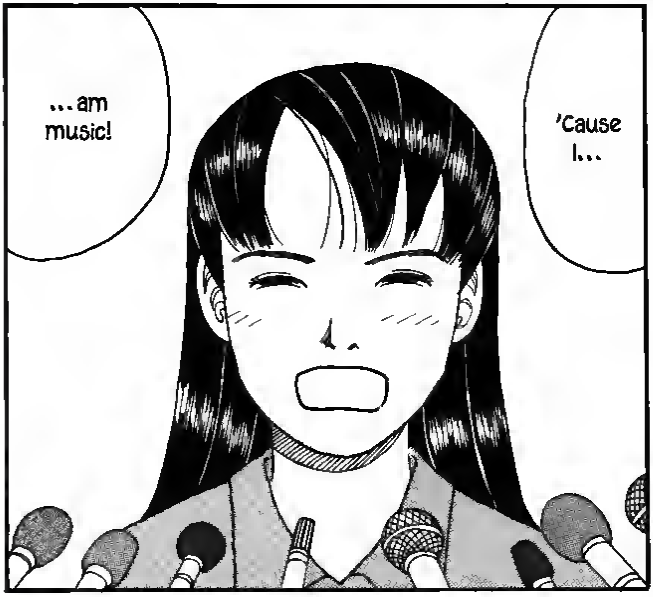

So I'm like an unsung hero?
You must have guided her well.


I'm sure Koichiro is overjoyed up in Heaven...
UTA NARUSE'S FATHER WAS KOICHIRO NARUSE, A GENIUS CONDUCTOR WHO DIED PREMATURELY.
Uta's Mother, Kimi Naruse (39)

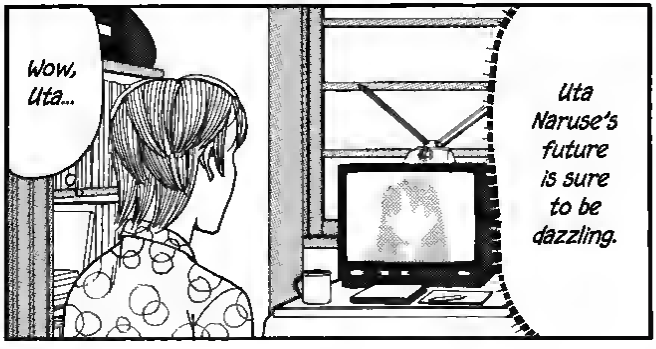

It's even more fun playing when everybody's watching!
Weren't you nervous?

...drops two whole meters!
Uta's fork-ball...
Former Teammate, Hiroki Okubo (42)

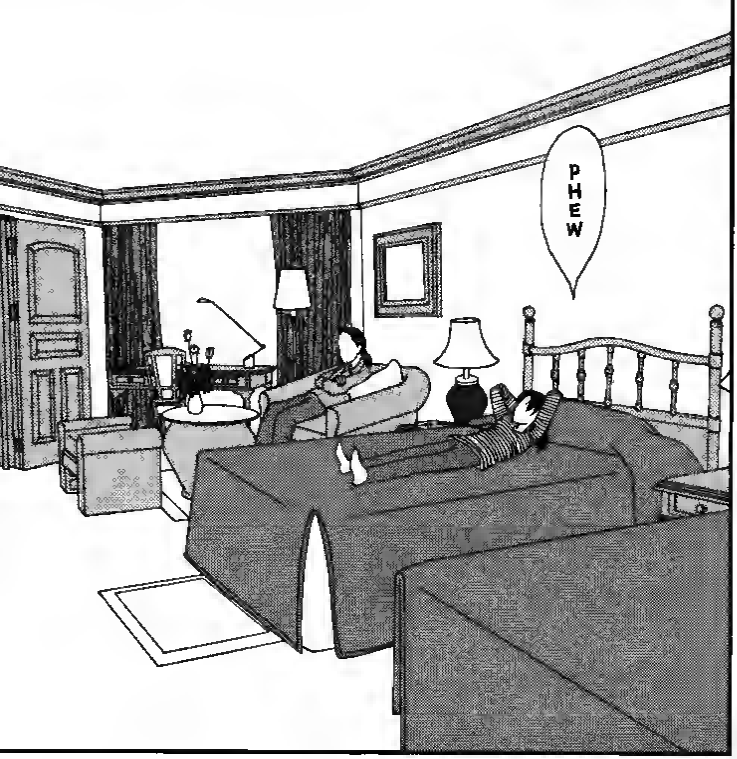
...played Hibari Misora for me!
That girl...
Neighborhood Soba Shop Owner, Ume Izawa (72)

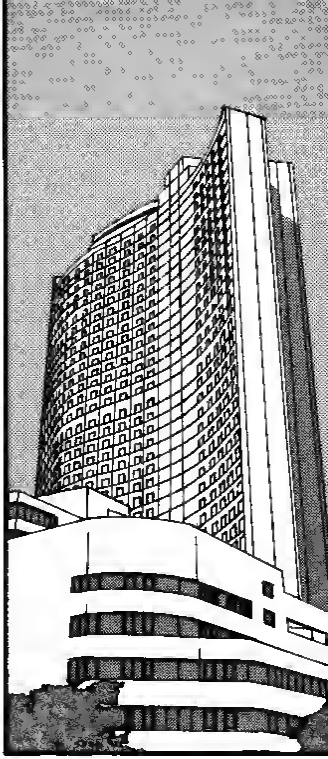


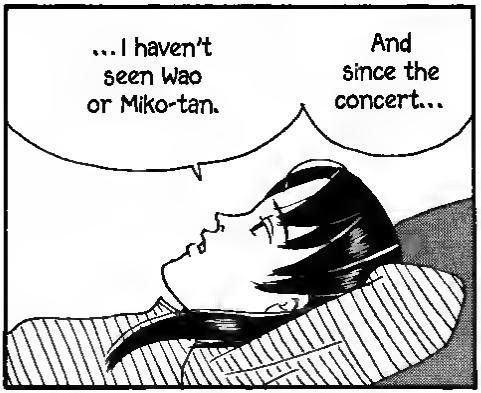
THE AUDIENCE'S ECSTATIC REACTION FROM THAT CONCERT IS STILL RINGING IN MY EARS.



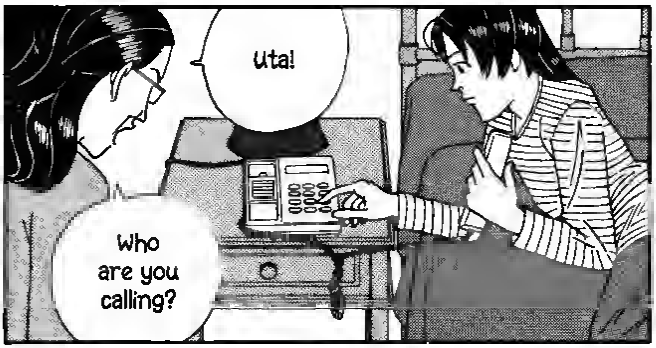
THE WORLD'S DISCOVERED UTA.
You have a call from an Eiko professor.
O-Okay.
...STILL REMAINS.
AND MY REALITY...
Okay...
So be there at four.
Professor Komiyama will be sitting in on tomorrow's extra lessons.
...TO CHANGE PIANO TEACHERS FROM PROFESSOR KOMIYAMA TO PROFESSOR MIKOSHIBA.
FOR NOW, I HAVE TO TRY...

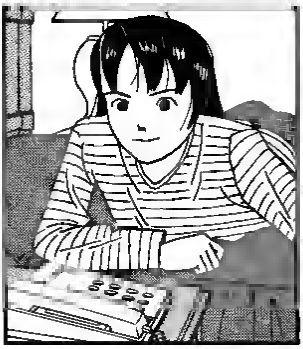

PHEW

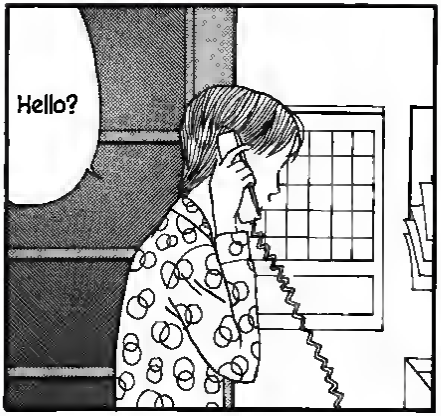



...I haven't seen Wao or Miko-tan.
And since the concert...

...and there are cameras everywhere.
One step outside...
Mama, I'm tired of interviews.

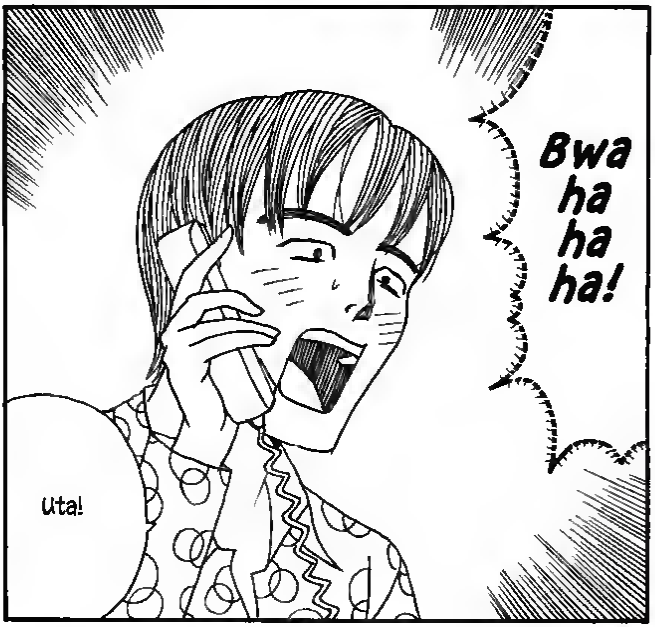

Uta!
Who are you calling?

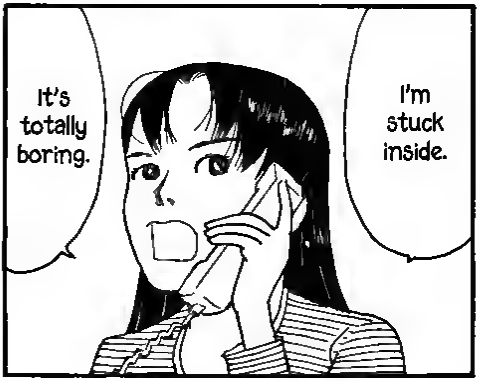



Hello?

KIKUNA GROCERY
RISING

Hey! Miss me?!
Not one bit!


Bwa ha ha ha!
Uta!


I'm stuck inside.
It's totally boring.

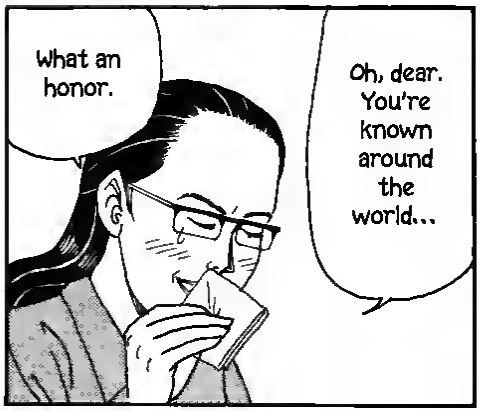
I feel like I see you on TV every day.
Oh, really.

I have the perfect idea.
Oh, yes!
Don't. He'll make our suite stink of vegetables!
We're at Central Hotel.
Hey, wanna come over?
We may be living in a hotel for a while...
We don't have time to go back there, you see?
Kikuna-san, would you mind bringing us the shrine from our apartment?
What?!
Oh, the spare key's in the mail-box.
...
Well? I'll pay you.
I haven't been able to tell her father yet...

AHEM
He'll be my errand boy!
Yesss! Wao's coming!
Re-mem-ber?
It's some-one you know.
I com-pletely forgot.
Oh, my!
Some-body's here.
Oh, him.
くす
くす
HEE
HEE
...beg-ging me to play with his orches-tra.
Before long, he'll be on his hands and knees...

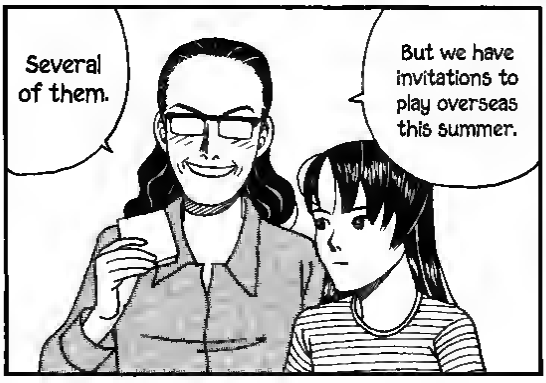
It's too bad things didn't work out last time.

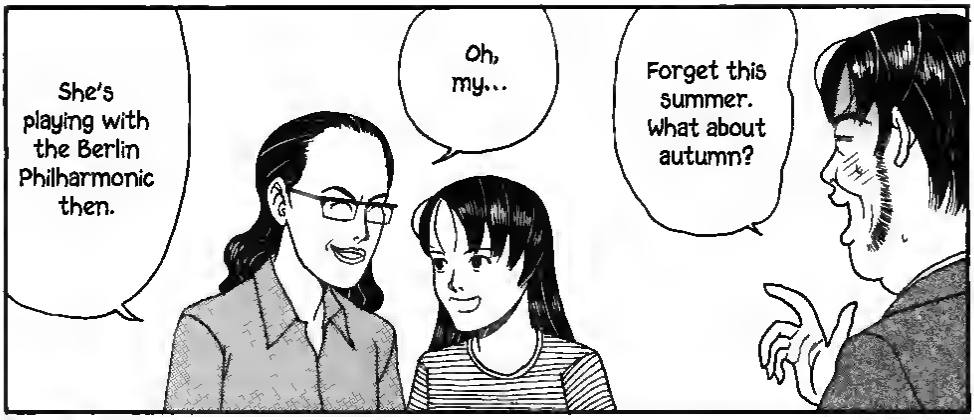
There you are!
Miss Uta!


What an honor.
Oh, dear. You're known around the world...

... in July.
But I'd love to have you perform with us...

I'm in a shaky spot.
Actually, that pianist you met got bad reviews.

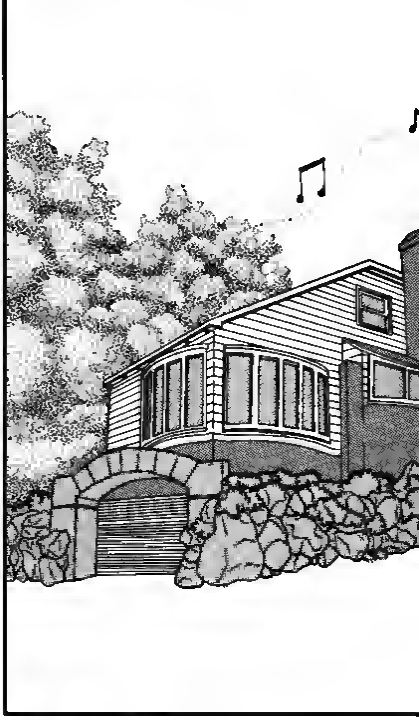

Several of them.
But we have invitations to play overseas this summer.

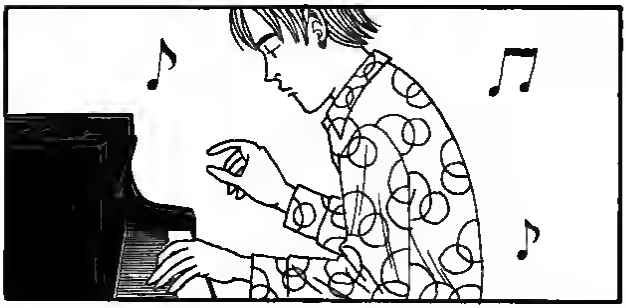

She's playing with the Berlin Philharmonic then.
Oh, my...
Forget this summer. What about autumn?

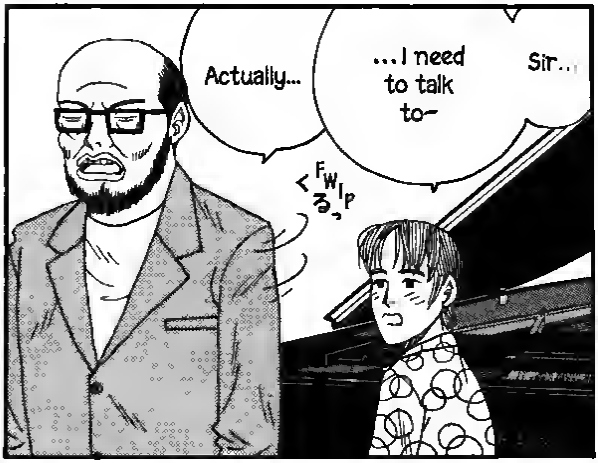
...

Ohohoho! We'll think about it!

Please, please, please!
Play with my orchestra!






Actually...
...I need to talk to-
Sir...
ぐぅ

...to observe you.
Sonokawa-kun asked me...

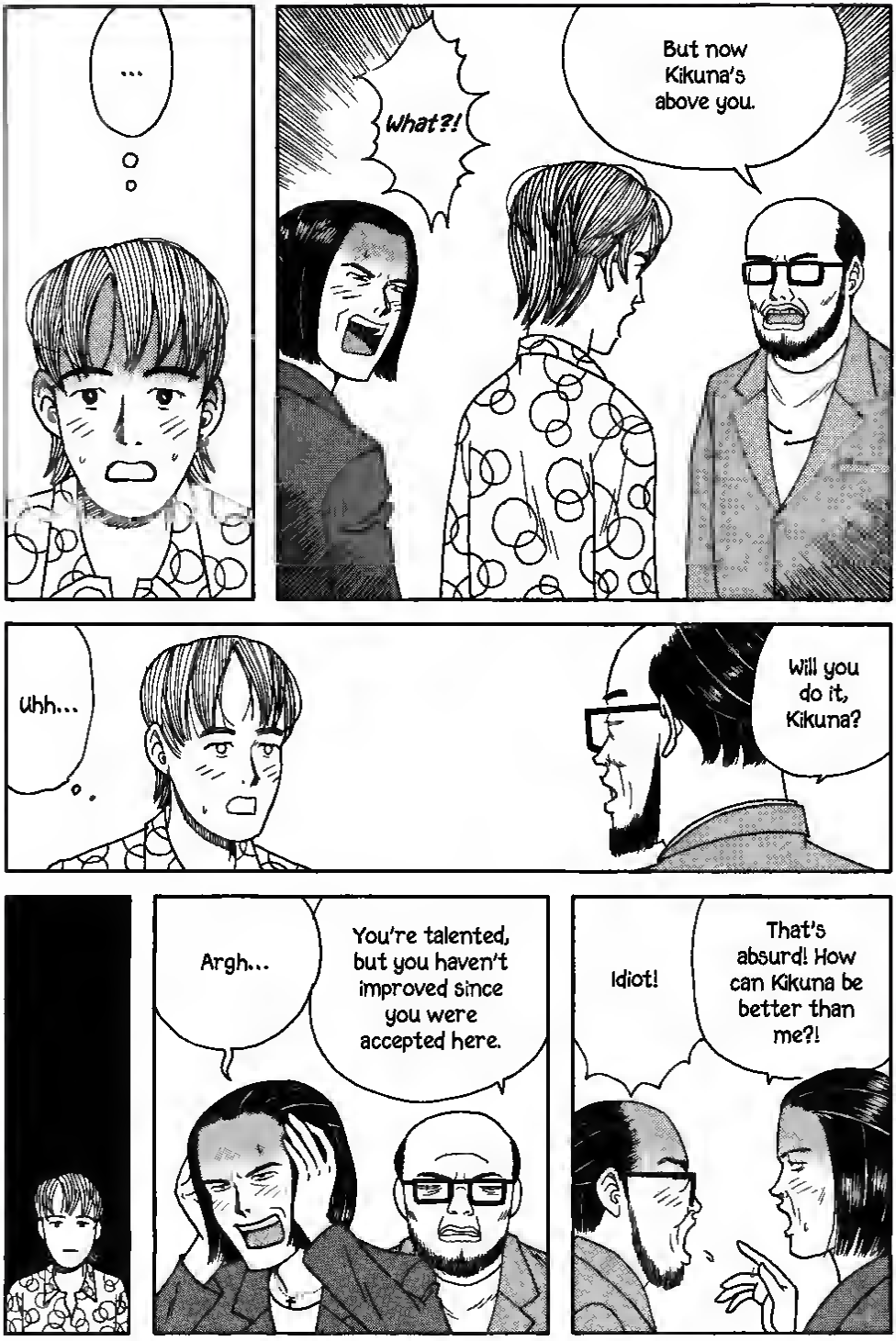
And I have to choose a pupil to recommend.

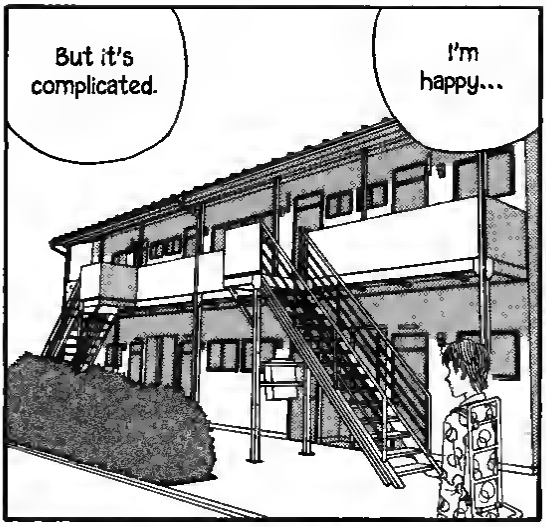
There will be a campus-wide audition for the Japan Pianist Competition.

GULP

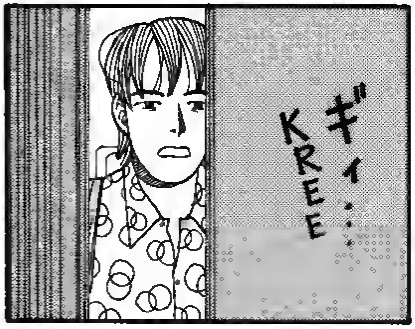
I said that you were my top candidate.

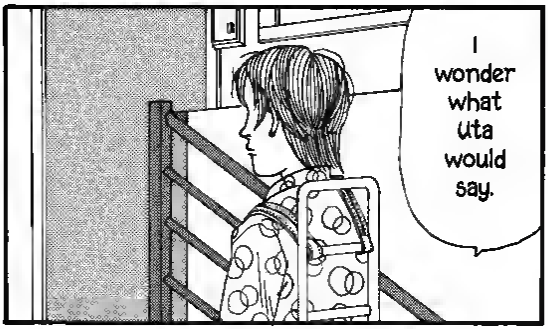
Hachioji!
Y-Yes?

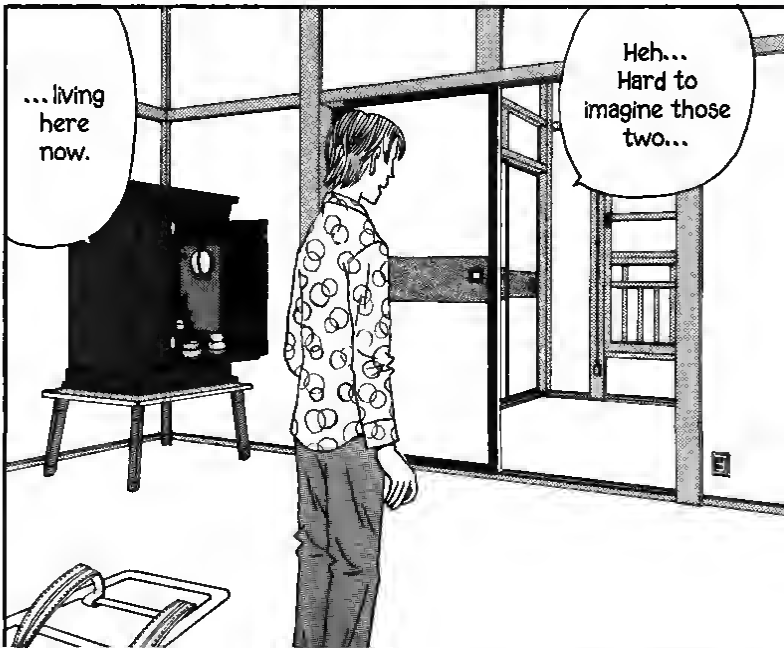

...
What?!
But now Kikuna's above you.
Uhh...
Will you do it, Kikuna?
Argh...
You're talented, but you haven't improved since you were accepted here.
Idiot!
That's absurd! How can Kikuna be better than me?!

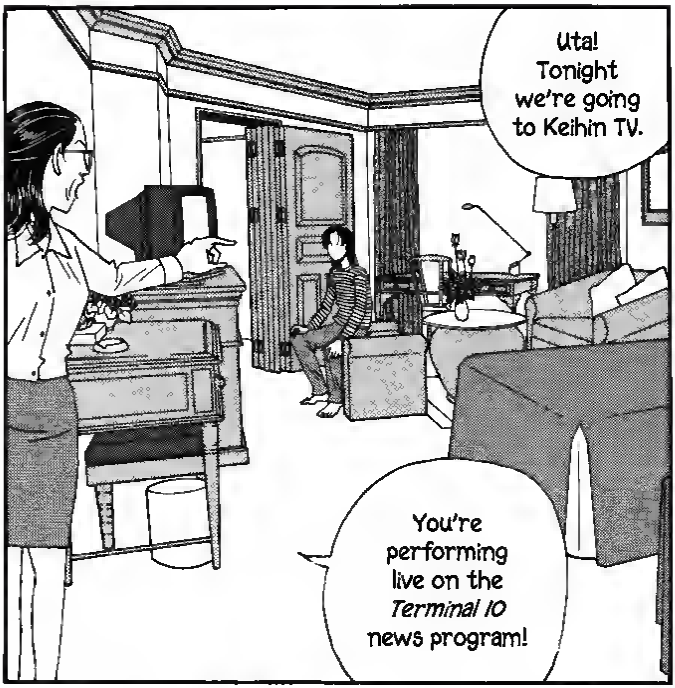

But it's complicated.
I'm happy...

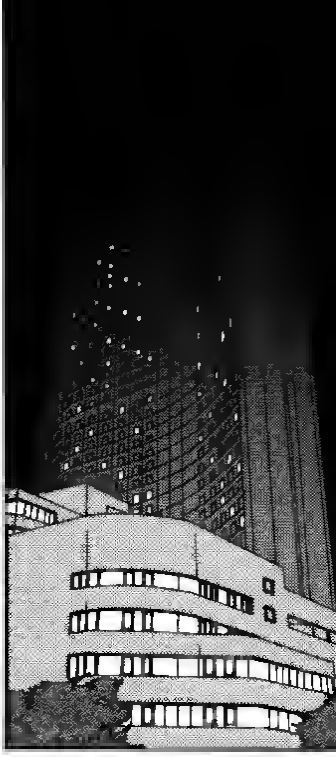
Awe-some!


ギィ・・・
KREE


I wonder what Uta would say.

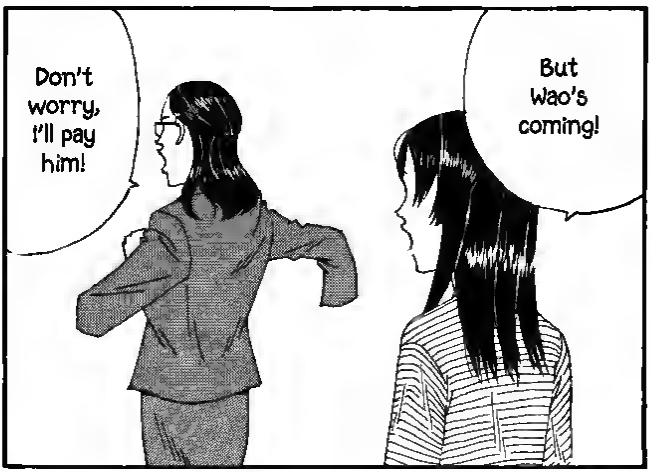

...living here now.
Heh... Hard to imagine those two...


Uta! Tonight we're going to Keihin TV.
You're performing live on the *Terminal 10* news program!

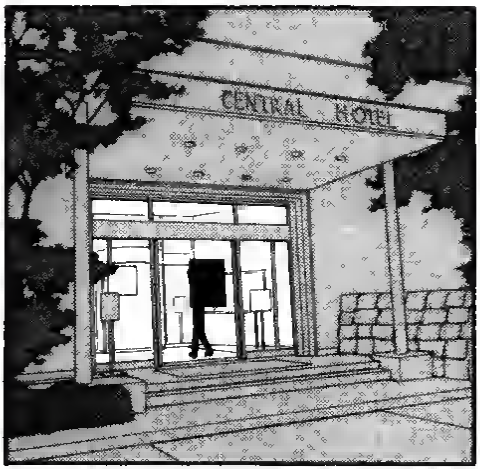


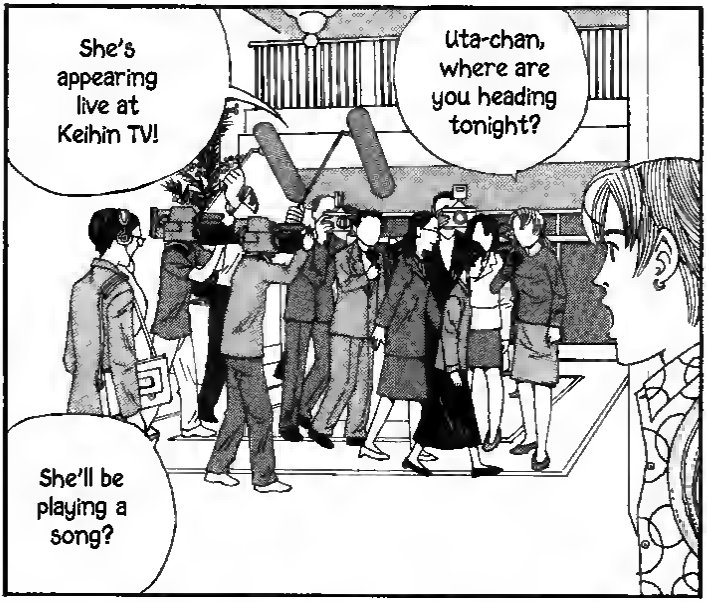
It came up suddenly!
What? You never told me that!

You know I've been a fan of that newscaster, Akira Kumegawa, for 10 years!

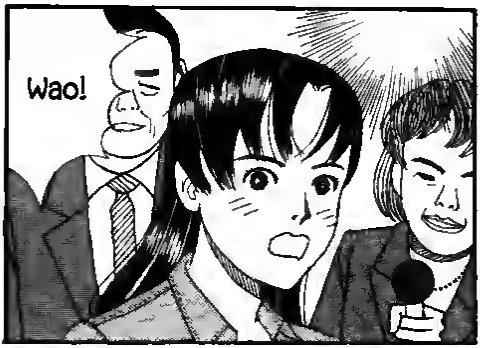

Don't worry, I'll pay him!
But Wao's coming!

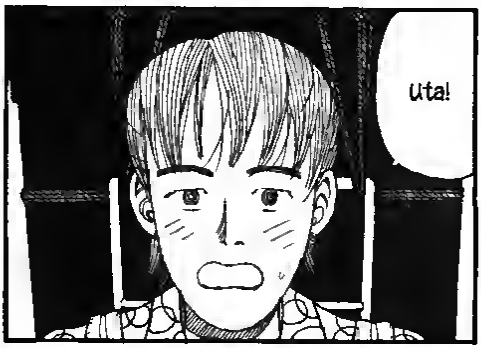
I'm here for Mrs. Naruse, in room 1025...


CENTRAL HOTEL


She's appearing live at Keihin TV!
Uta-chan, where are you heading tonight?
She'll be playing a song?

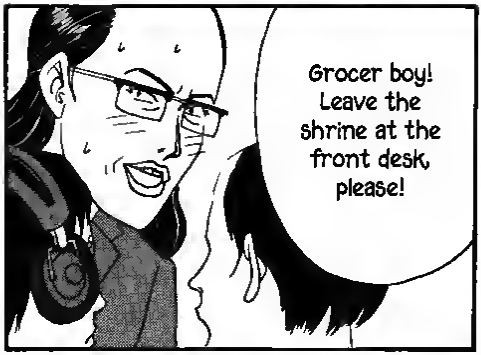
!

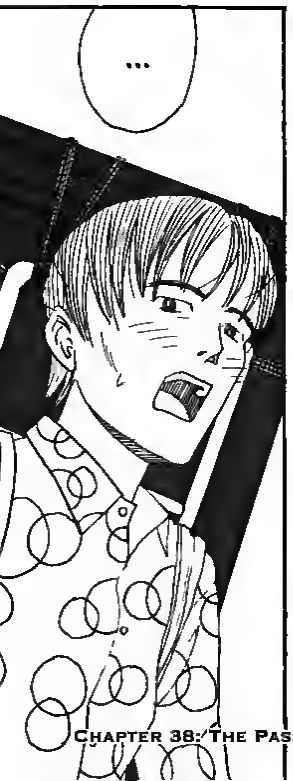

Wao!


Uta!

Mama!
Hurry. We're pressed for time!

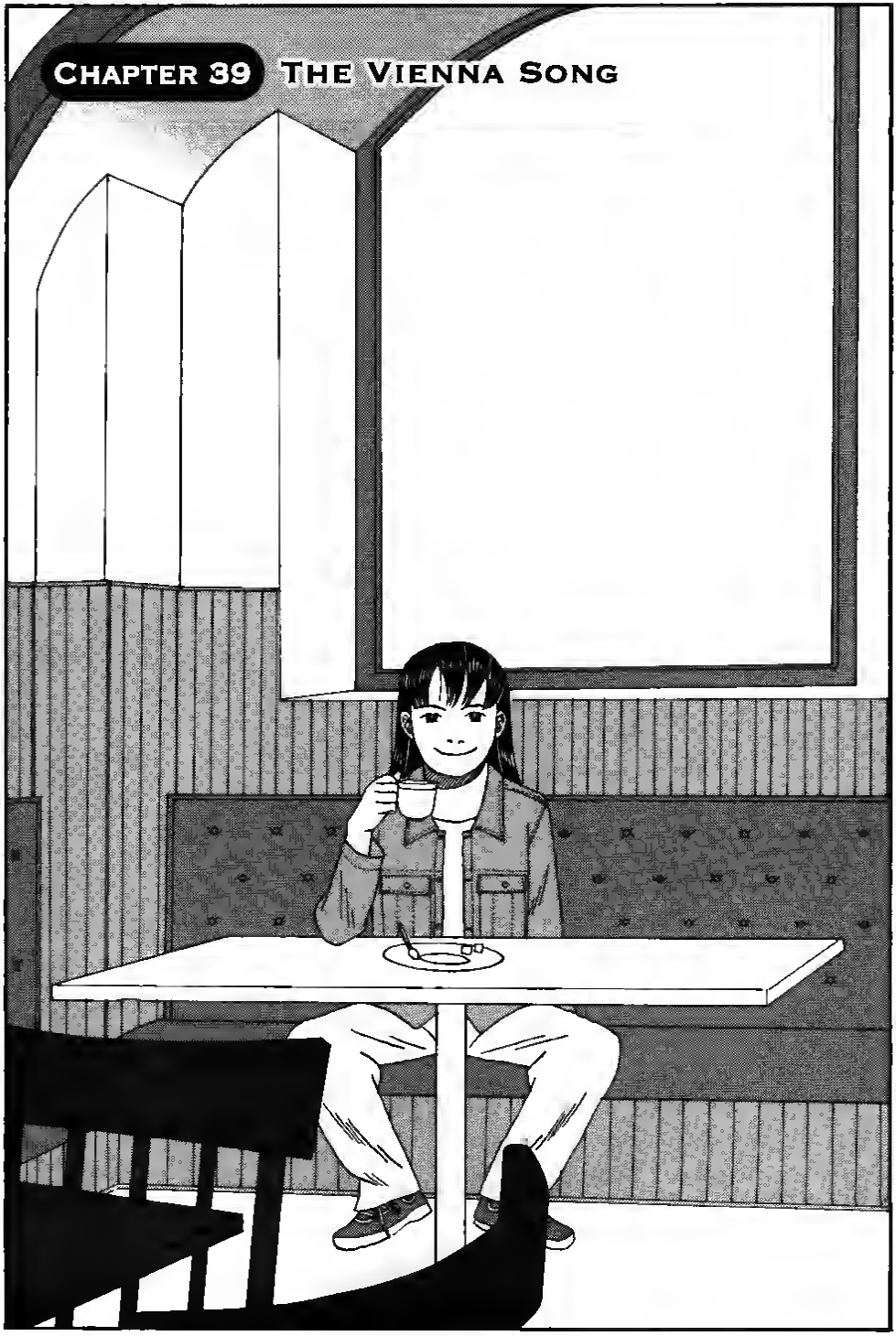
I'll call you later!
I'm sorry, Wao!


Grocer boy! Leave the shrine at the front desk, please!


...

...

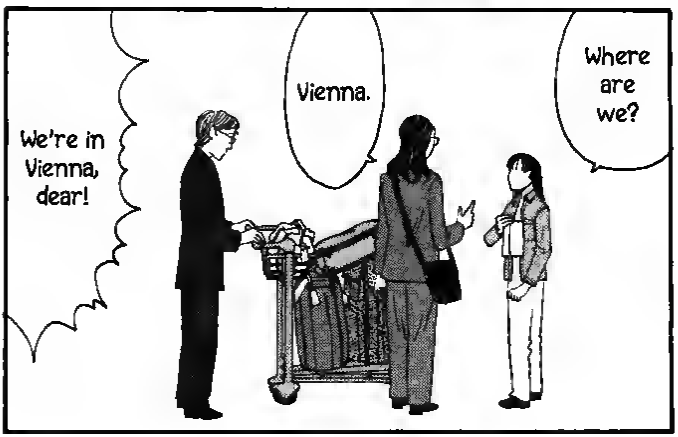
Chapter 39 The Vienna Song

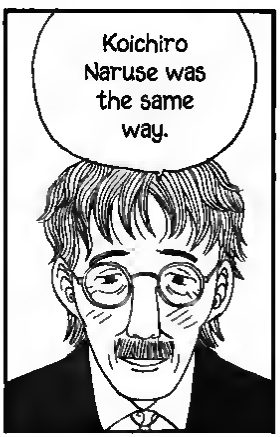


Achtung! LUFTHANSA 108...

No more planes!
You get motion sick-ness so easily.

Blee-eh.
I don't feel so good.


We're in Vienna, dear!
Vienna.
Where are we?


Koichiro Naruse was the same way.

Do you remember the last time we were here?
No wonder there are so many foreigners.
I don't remember.
But you had fun.
When Papa died?
I couldn't enjoy the sights at all.
Uta, Uta!
This is Feuermann, our principal conductor.
Mr. Gunter.
Sehr angenom!

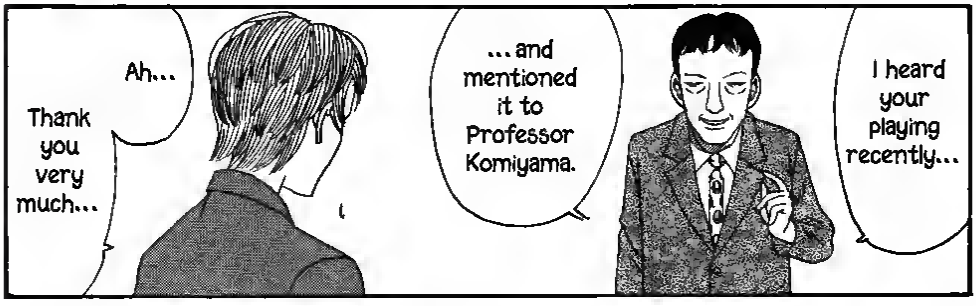
VIENNA CONSERVA-TORY OF MUSIC
I'll never forget this perfor-mance.
This was Naruse and Mikoshiba...

After the concert, Naruse, who'd conducted Mozart in Salzburg...
I was amazed.
The best Bartók I'd ever heard was played by a Japanese man.
The concert was a hit, so the guests were quite lively.
...attended a cruise party.
WHEN I CALLED OUT TO HIM, HE SAID HE WAS SEASICK.
NARUSE STOOD ALONE AT THE STERN OF THE SHIP.

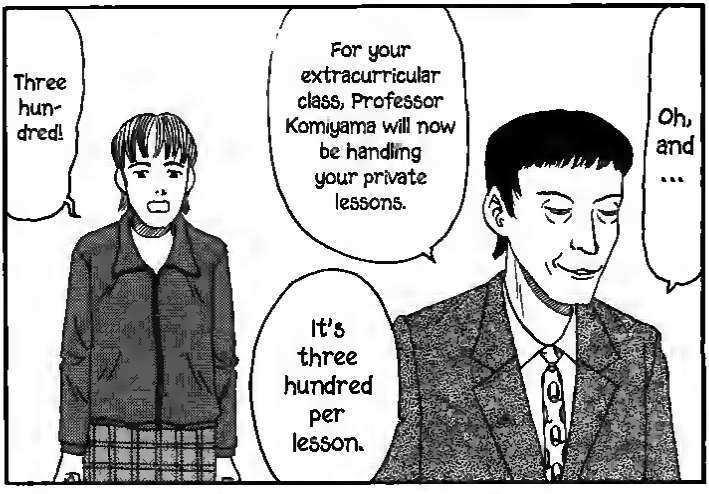
Kind of a dumb way to die...
You know the rest.
And that was the last time anyone saw him.
Thank you for your kindness...
The people of Vienna mourned his death.
Uta, together we'll play a Bartók to surpass Naruse's final concert!
Vienna still remembers Naruse.

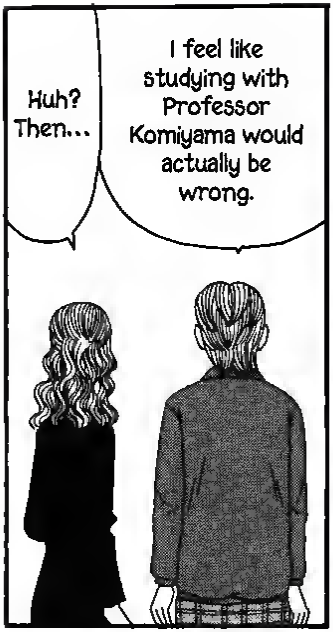
...Kikuna-kun.
Congratula-tions...

Eiko Music College


Ah...
Thank you very much...
...and mentioned it to Professor Komiyama.
I heard your playing recently...

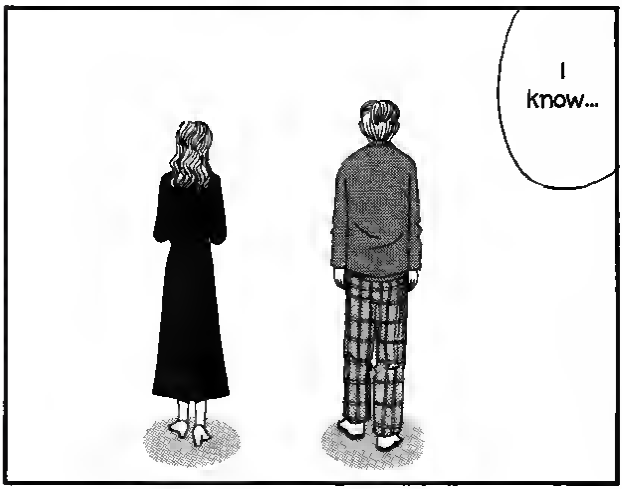
...
I'll collect it at the end of the month.


Three hun-dred!
For your extracurricular class, Professor Komiyama will now be handling your private lessons.
Oh, and ...
It's three hundred per lesson.

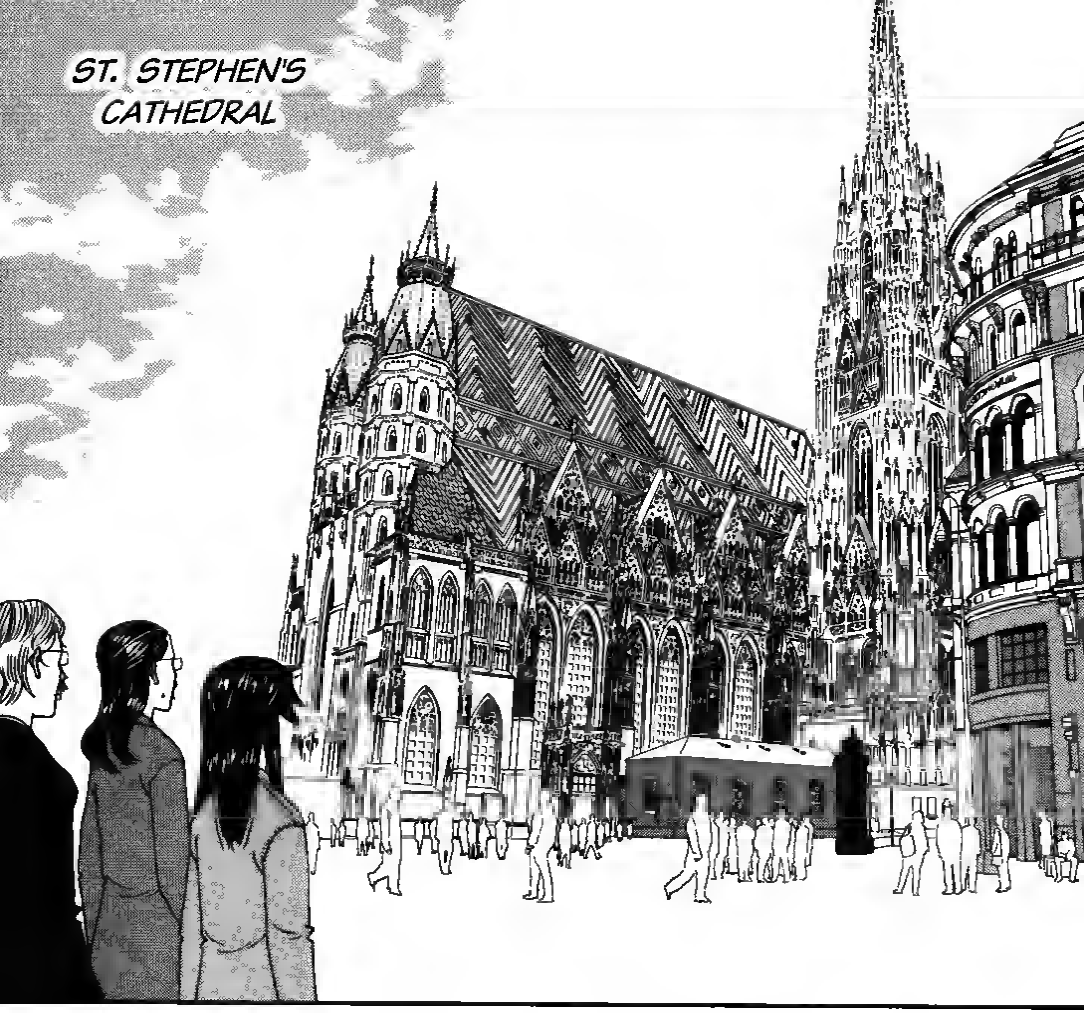

Huh? Then...
I feel like studying with Professor Komiyama would actually be wrong.

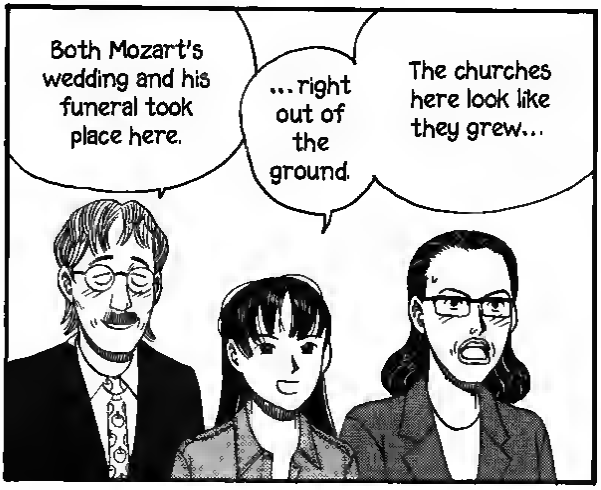
...it just doesn't seem right to me.
Even when I tell myself money's not an issue...

You might not get another one!
But this is a big chance for you!

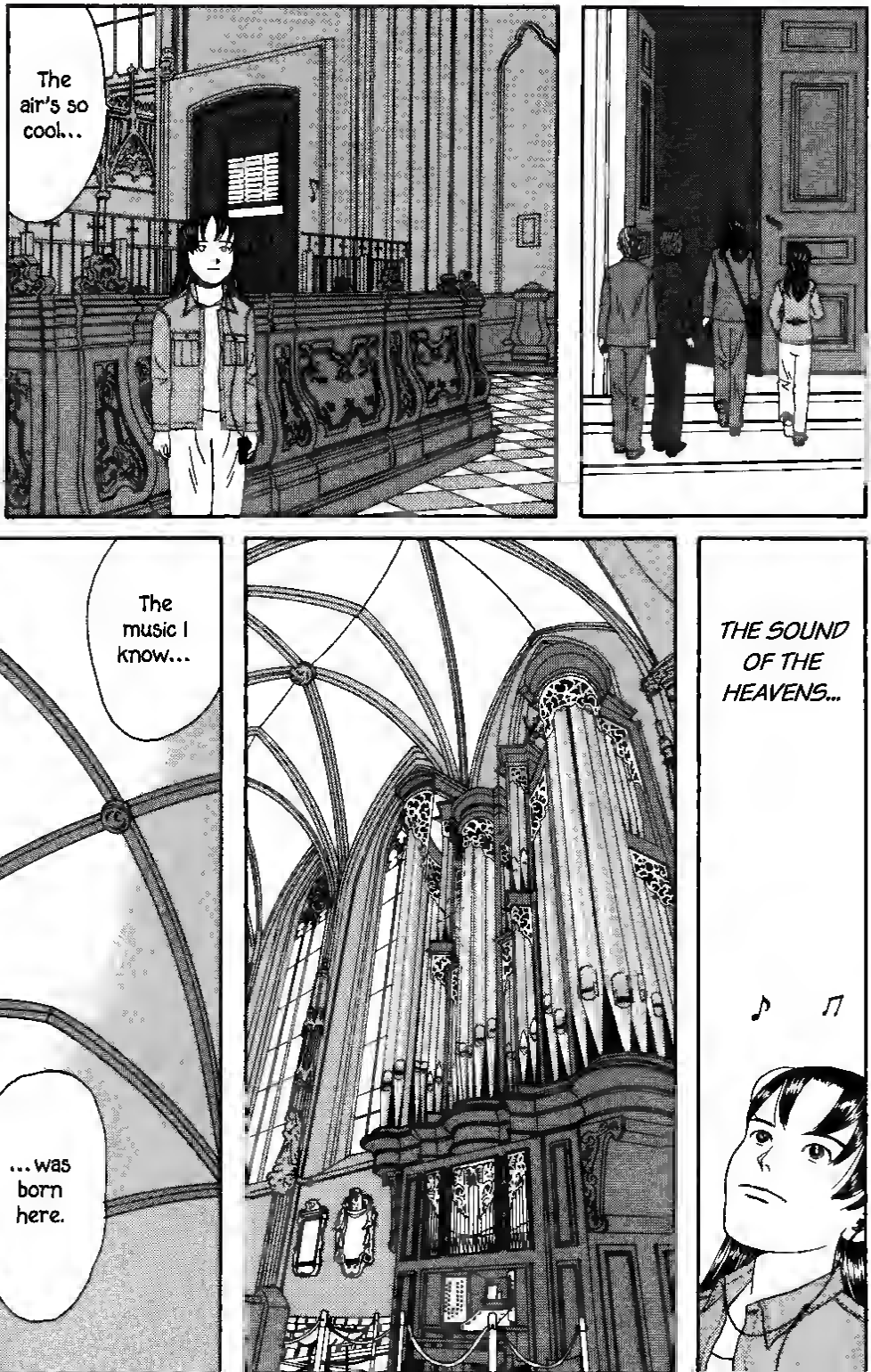

I know...

I want to switch to Professor Mikoshiba.


ST. STEPHEN'S CATHEDRAL

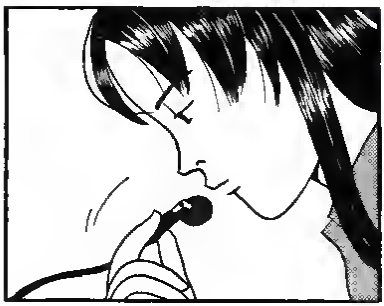

Both Mozart's wedding and his funeral took place here.
...right out of the ground.
The churches here look like they grew...

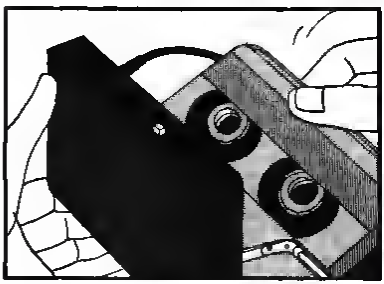
It's as huge as Godzilla!
Whoa.

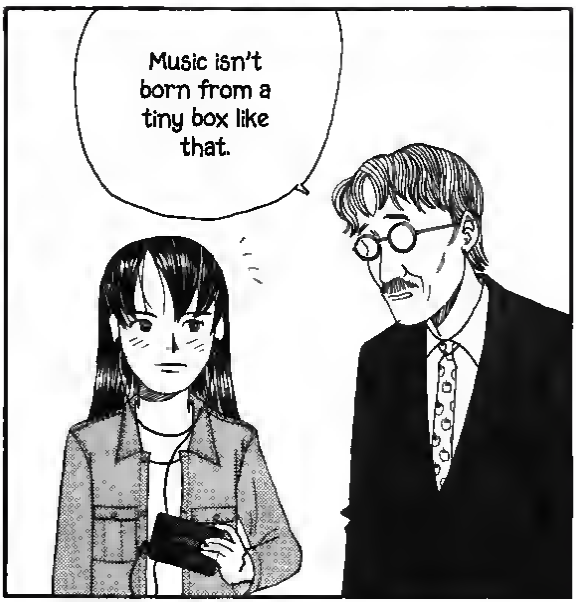

The air's so cool...
The music I know...
...was born here.
THE SOUND OF THE HEAVENS...
♪ ♫

That's right...
...uta.

The "words" I speak...
...were all born here



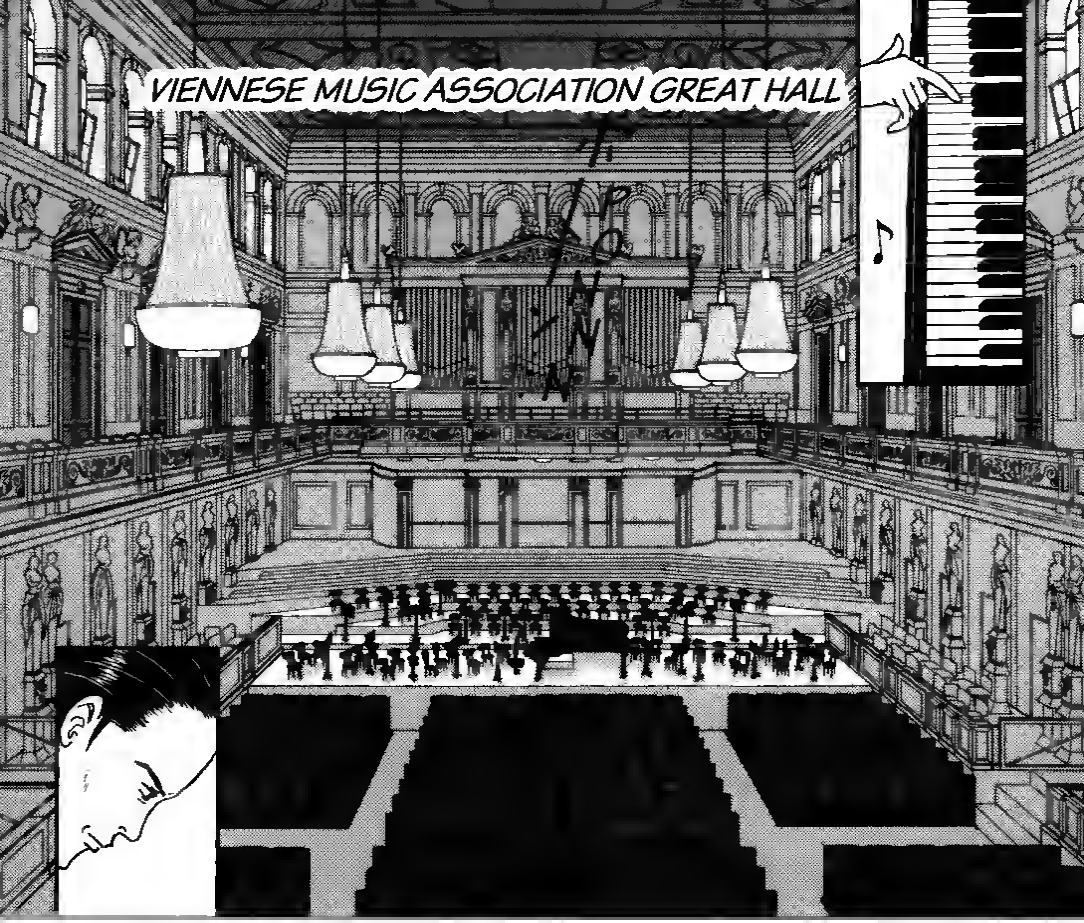


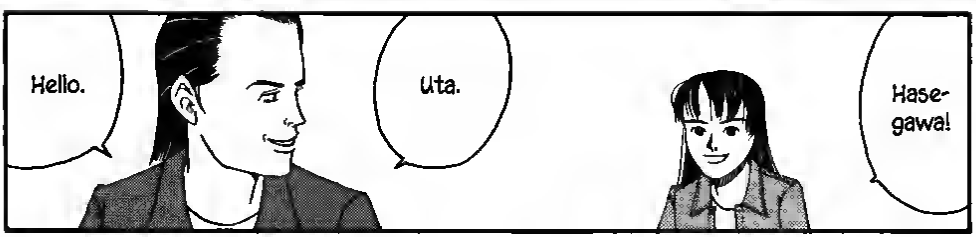

Music isn't born from a tiny box like that.

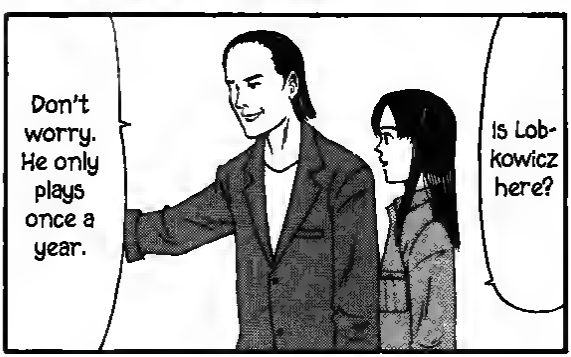
I'LL GIVE THIS SOUND BACK TO GOD!

Ha!

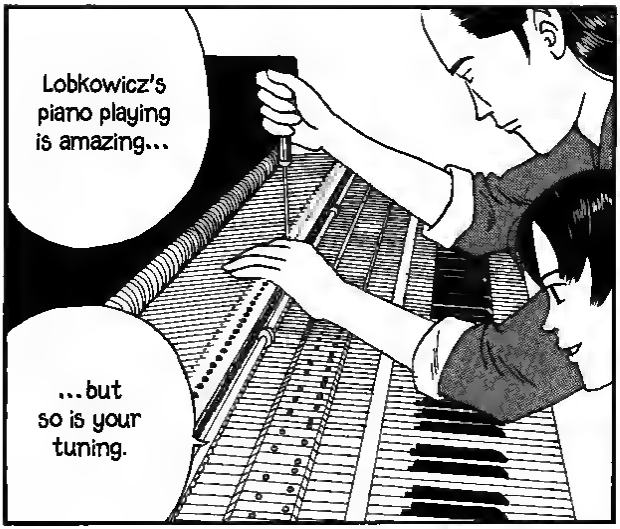
Uta...

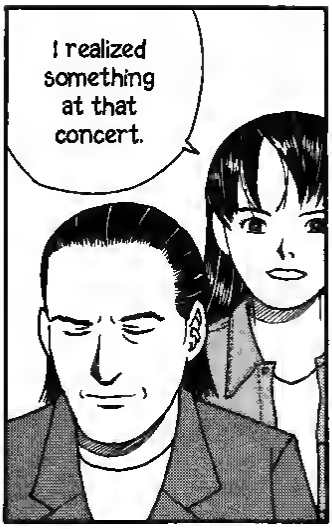

VIENNESE MUSIC ASSOCIATION GREAT HALL


Hello.
Uta.
Hase-gawa!


Don't worry. He only plays once a year.
Is Lob-kowicz here?

I just got here.


Lobkowicz's piano playing is amazing...
...but so is your tuning.

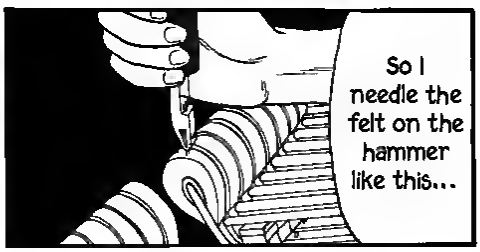

I realized something at that concert.

Your sound...
...is always like a diamond.

But I want...
...a clearer, bolder sound.

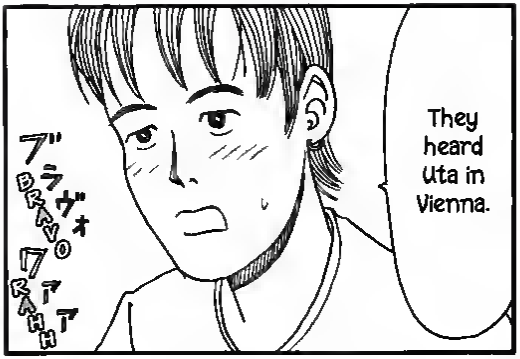
And carefully, carefully...
...adjust the sound.

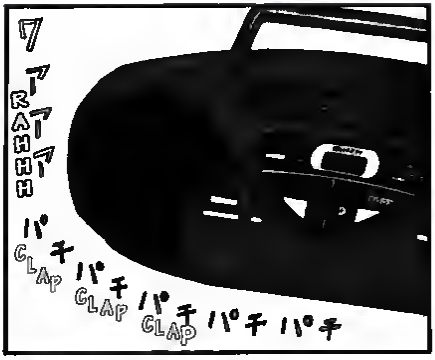
But it's not made up of just hard sounds.


So I needle the felt on the hammer like this...

...AND SHE CAN BRING TO LIFE EVERYTHING IN BARTÓK'S FOREST: THE CRIES OF THE BIRDS, THE SOUNDS OF THE INSECTS, THE RUSTLING IN THE TREES.
BECAUSE OF THAT, UTA'S PALETTE OF A HUNDRED SOUNDS TRANSFORMS INTO A THOUSAND...

ブラヴォ!!
BRAVO!!



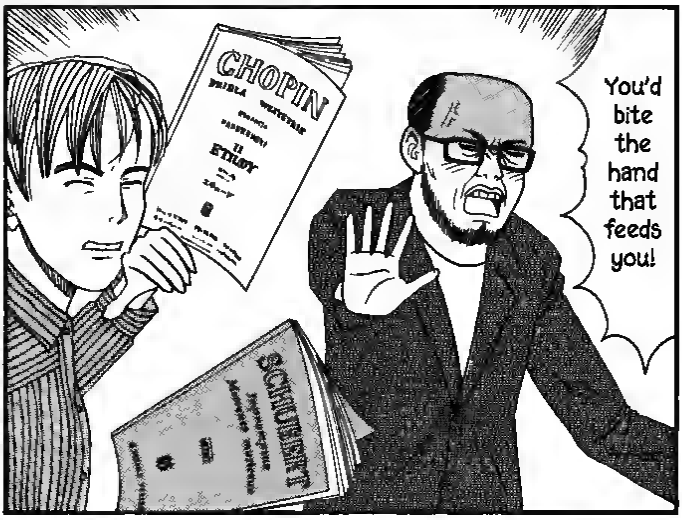

アアアア

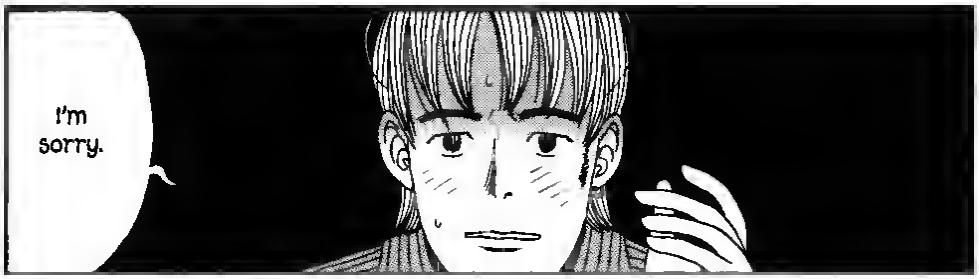
Chapter 40 The Okay Song

YOU WANT TO STUDY UNDER MIKOSHIBA?

RUMBLE
ゴゴゴ…

I don't remember him doing anything for me.

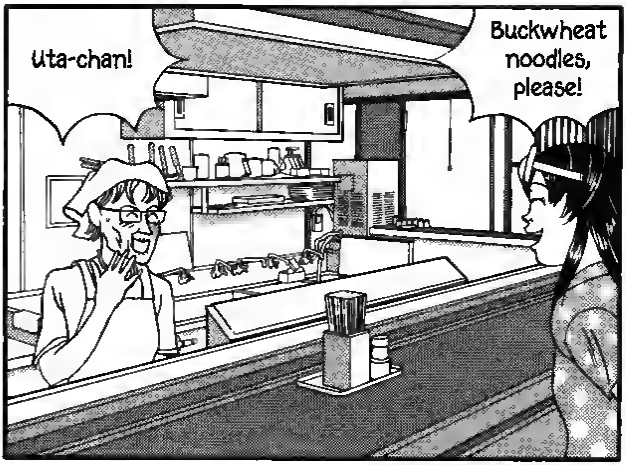

CHOPIN
ETUDE
SCHUBERT
You'd bite the hand that feeds you!


I'm sorry.

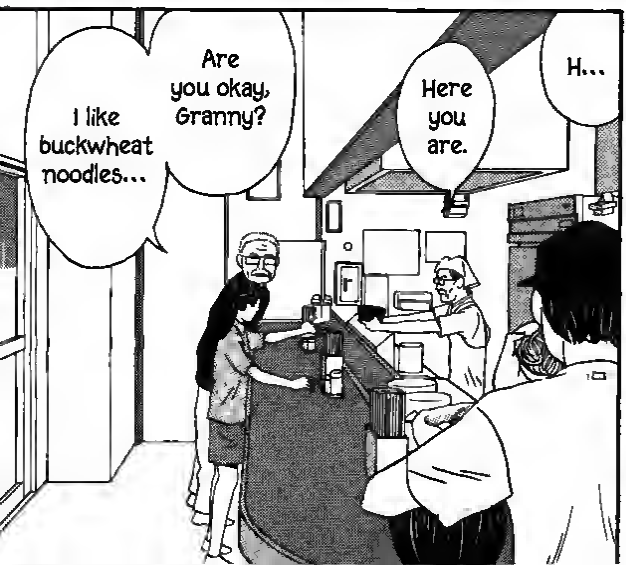
I'm sure you realize...
If this had at least been before I entered you into the audition...!
...that I'm revoking your entry.
Have I sealed my fate?
RUMBLE RUMBLE RUMBLE

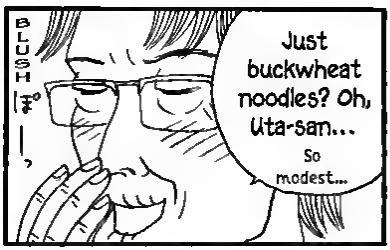
Oh.
You can let me out here.
PUTT PUTT PUTT
WOOF WOOF
WOOF
Ha ha ha ha!
SPLASH
SPLASH
WHINE
Shut up, you!
SPLASH
Uta's in Europe.
No way...
Huh?

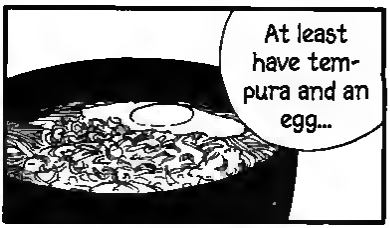
Wassup?

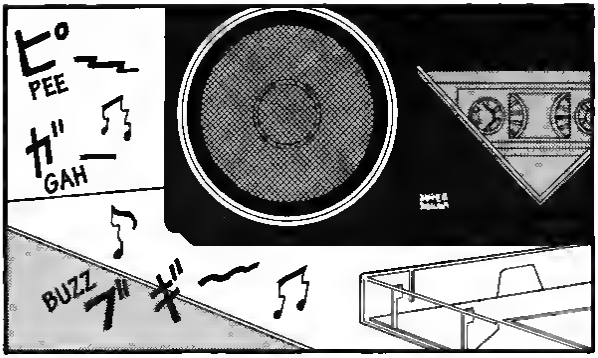

Uta-chan!
Buckwheat noodles, please!

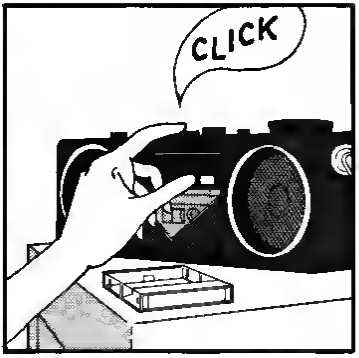
SMILE

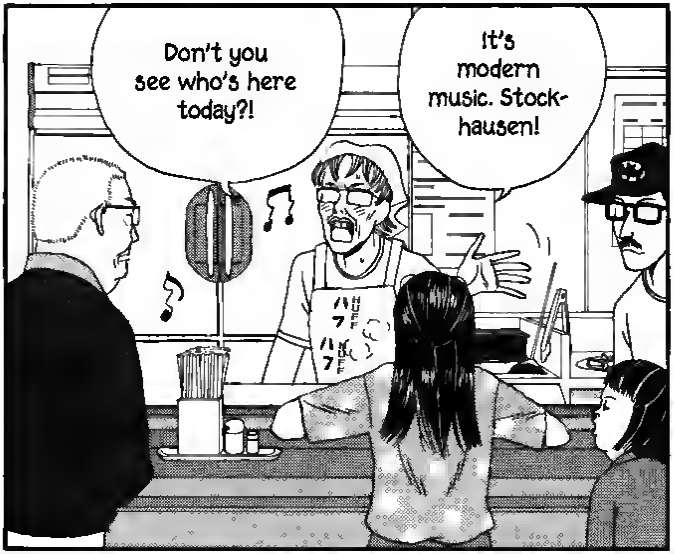

I like buckwheat noodles...
Are you okay, Granny?
Here you are.
H...


BLUSH
Just buckwheat noodles? Oh, Uta-san...
So modest...


At least have tempura and an egg...

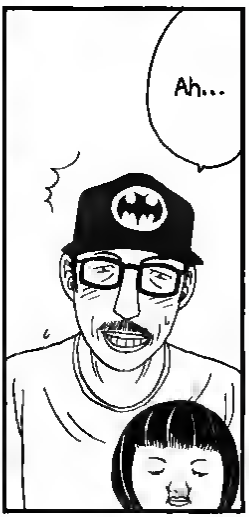

ピー
PEE
ガー
GAH
BUZZ
ブー

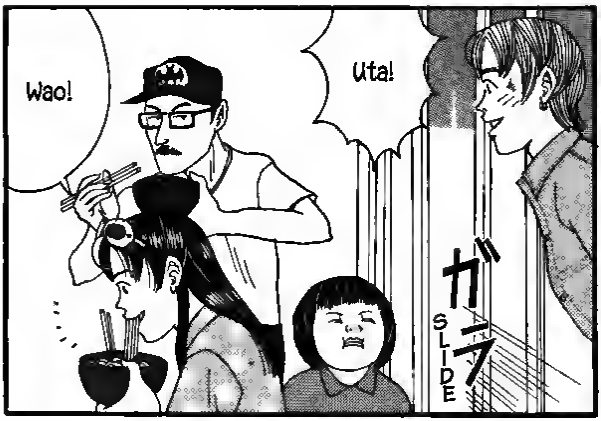

CLICK

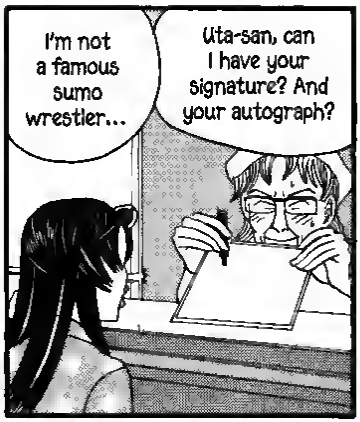

Don't you see who's here today?!
It's modern music. Stock-hausen!

Hey, something's wrong with the radio.

It's Uta Naruse!
Uta Naruse!
SUUURP


Ah...

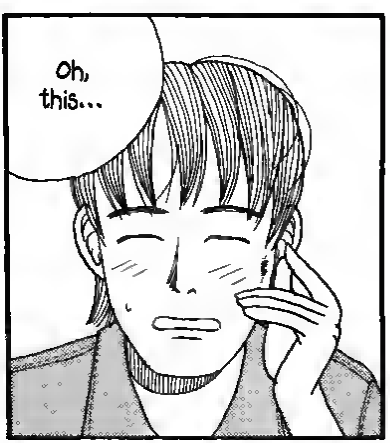

Wao!
Uta!
ガラ
SLIDE

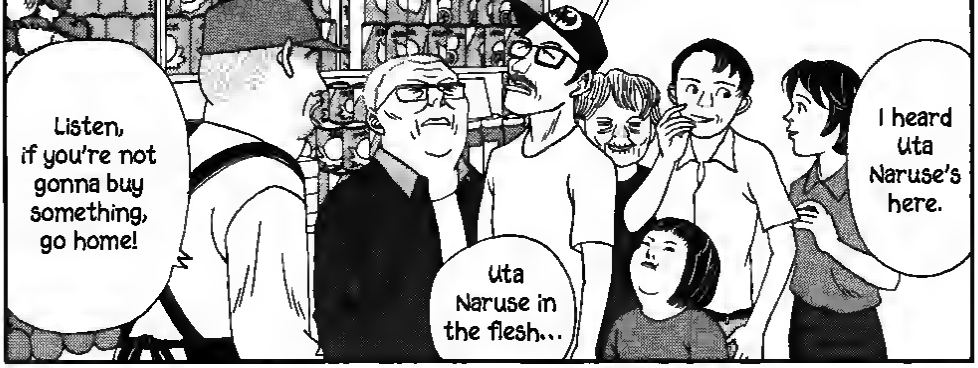

I'm not a famous sumo wrestler...
Uta-san, can I have your signature? And your autograph?

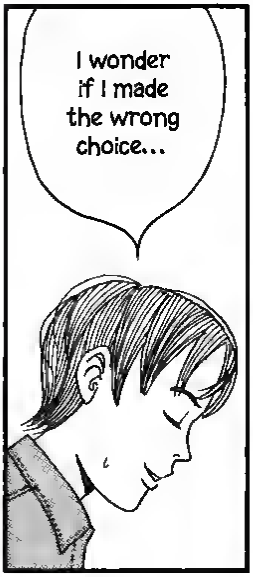
What's up with your face?

I just got back this morning.
I thought you were in Germany or France!

KIKUNA GROCERY


Oh, this...


Listen, if you're not gonna buy something, go home!
Uta Naruse in the flesh...
I heard Uta Naruse's here.

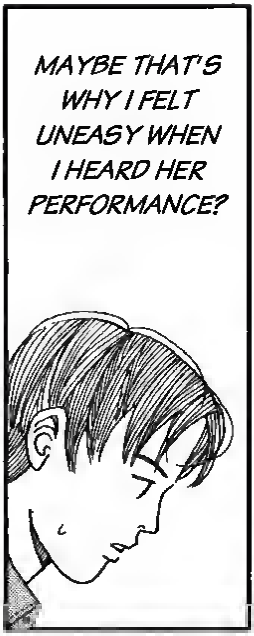

I wonder if I made the wrong choice...

You turned down the audition!
Ha, nice going!

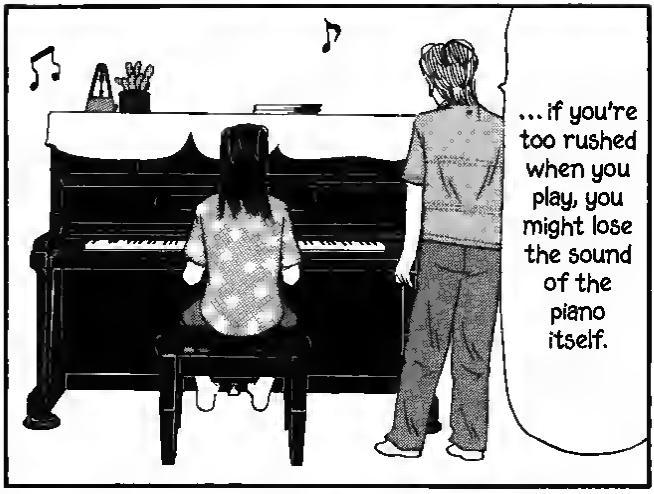
You gotta make it yourself.
...isn't something that's decided for you.

You know, fate...

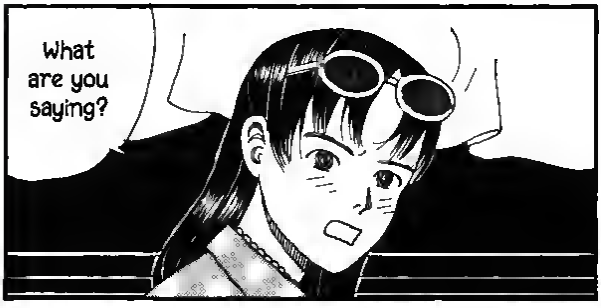
Did you tell Miko-tan?
You're right.
Yeah...
I CAN BELIEVE IT WHEN UTA SAYS IT.
Well, I'm just glad he's feeling better.
...so I plan on telling him after the concert.
I don't want to bother him right now...
Mr. Mikoshiba is playing a comeback concert.
It sounds worse and worse when it rains.
Haha, this sound sucks.
HE'S BACK IN ACTION BECAUSE OF UTA, TOO...

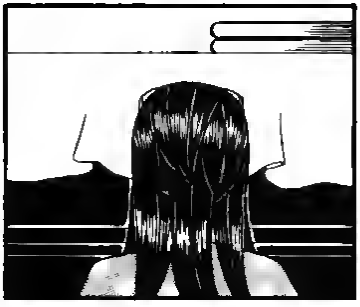

MAYBE THAT'S WHY I FELT UNEASY WHEN I HEARD HER PERFORMANCE?

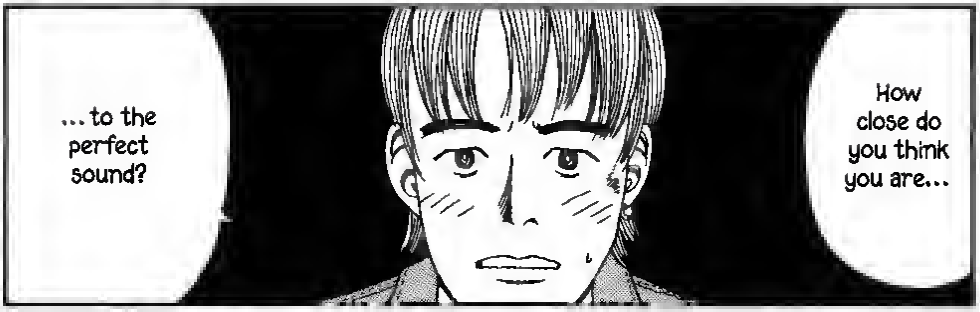
His touch turns my hundred sounds into a thousand.
Lobkowicz's piano tuner is tuning for me now.


...if you're too rushed when you play, you might lose the sound of the piano itself.

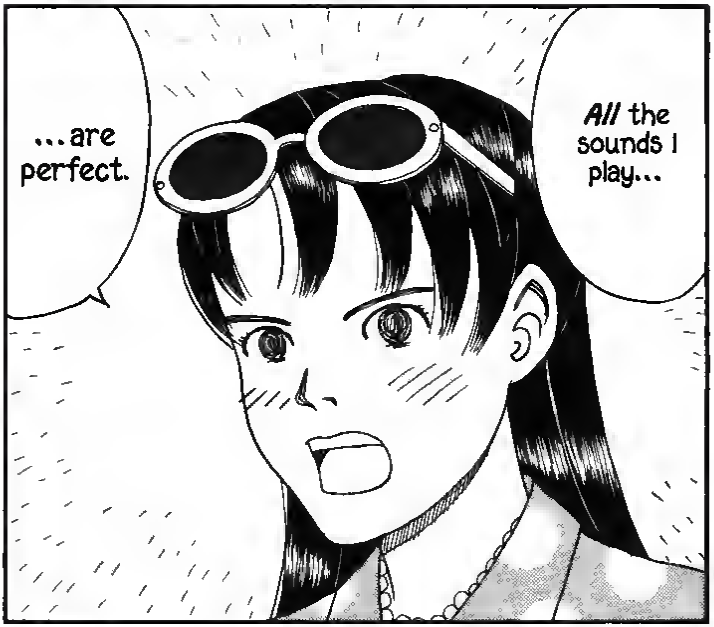
Maybe it's not my place to say, but...
Uta...


What are you saying?

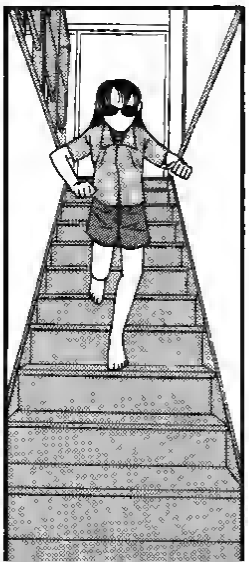


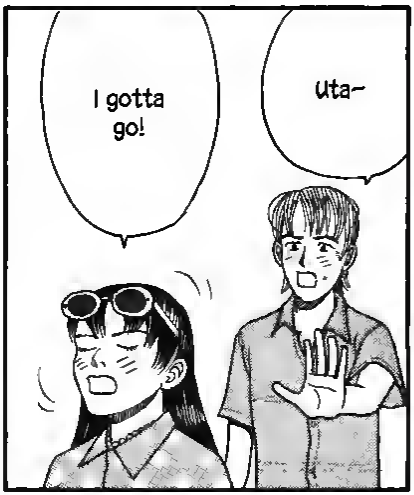

How close do you think you are...
...to the perfect sound?

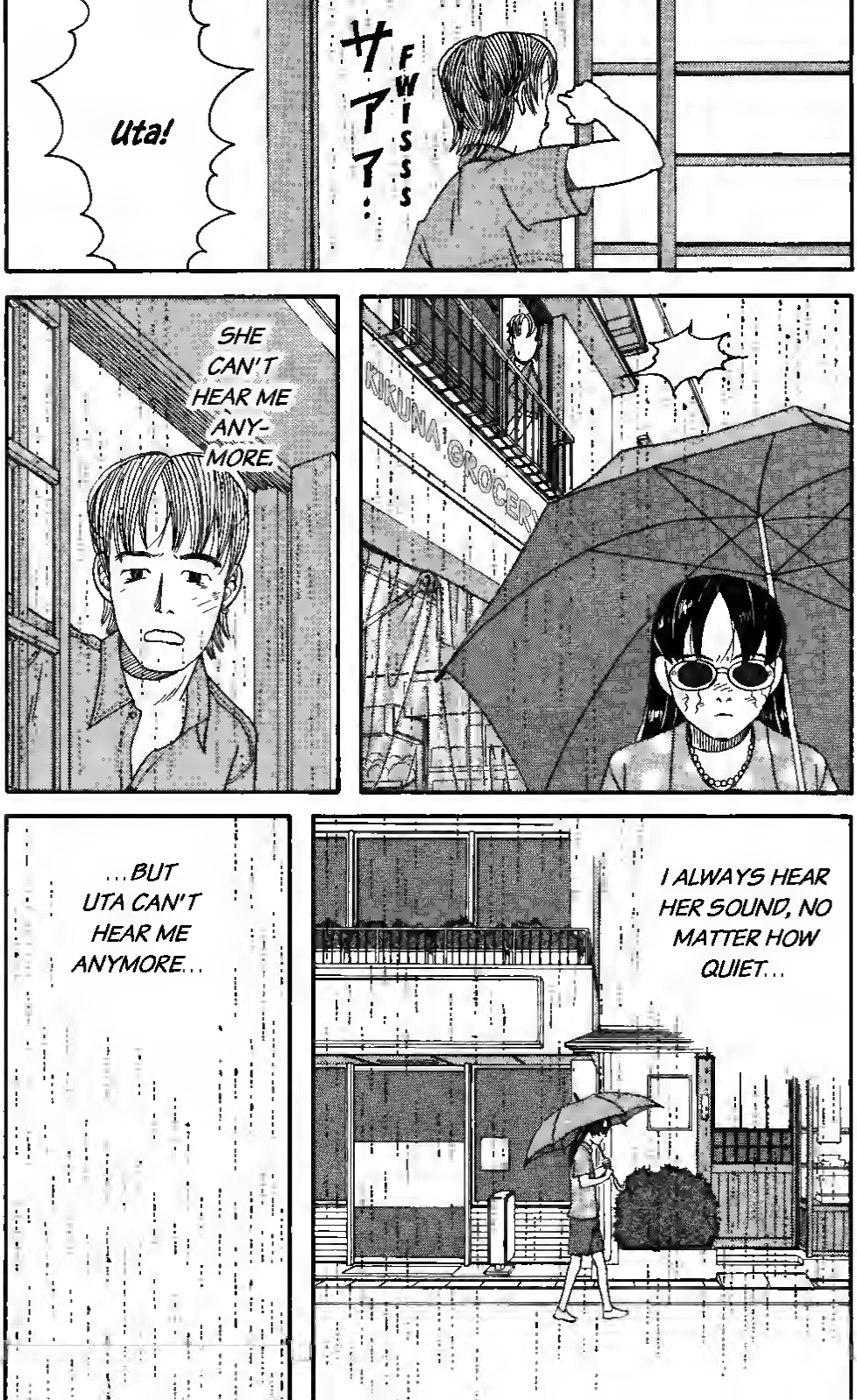
Never thought you'd be lecturing me when you suck so much!


All the sounds I play...
...are perfect.

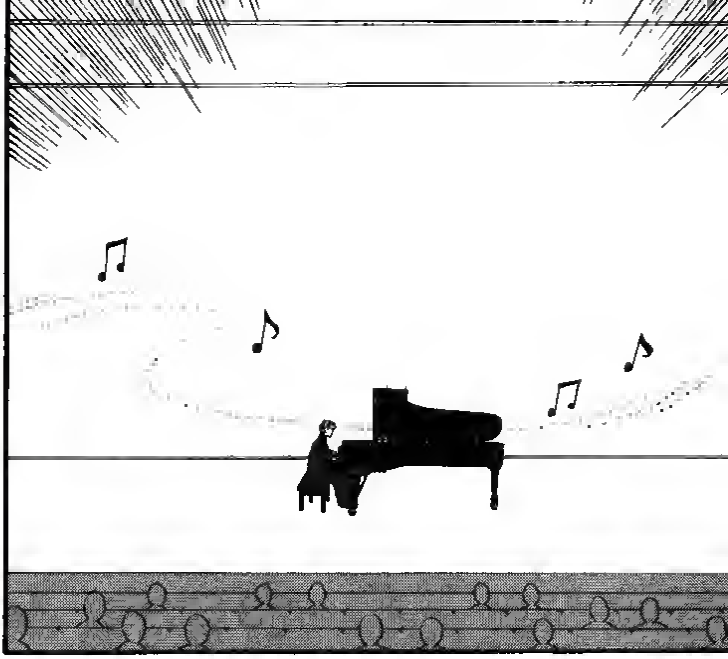
KIKU




I gotta go!
Uta-

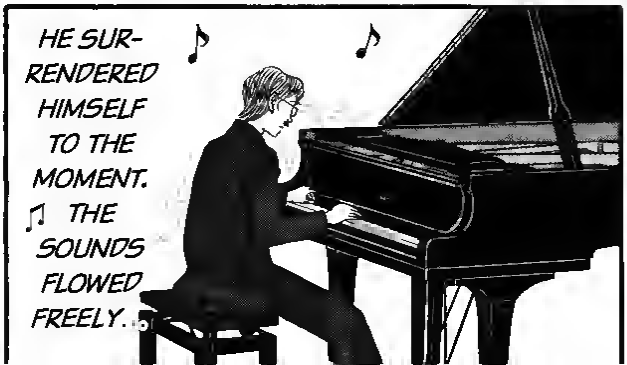

Uta!
サアア!
FWISSS
SHE CAN'T HEAR ME ANY-MORE.
KIKUNA GROCERY
...BUT UTA CAN'T HEAR ME ANYMORE...
I ALWAYS HEAR HER SOUND, NO MATTER HOW QUIET...

And for a time I was worried that my tendonitis might prevent me from recapturing my old sound.
I always used to get so nervous before concerts.
THE NEXT DAY, PROFESSOR MIKOSHIBA HAD HIS FIRST CONCERT IN 10 YEARS.
But now I think I should just go for it.
CLAP CLAP
He sounds like Uta...
I decided to consider my current playing to be the perfect sound.

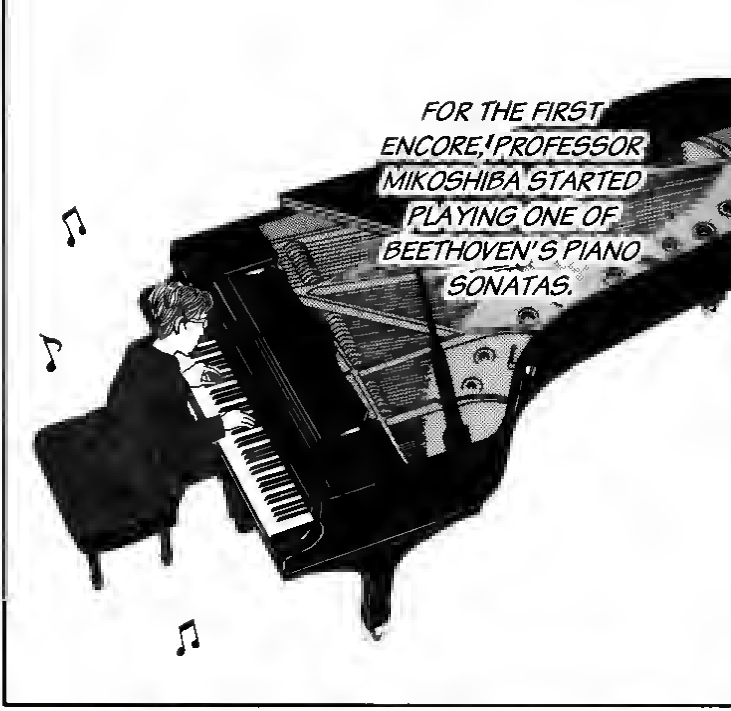


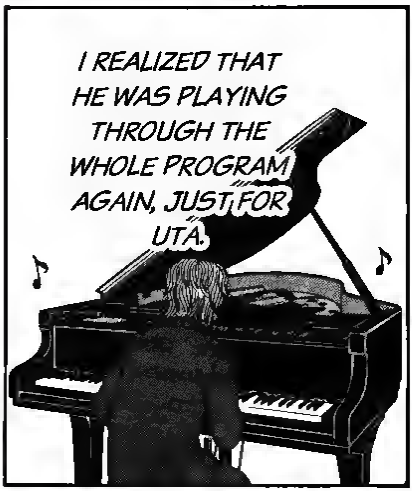
...BUT NEVER BETRAYED THE ORIGINAL COMPOSITION.

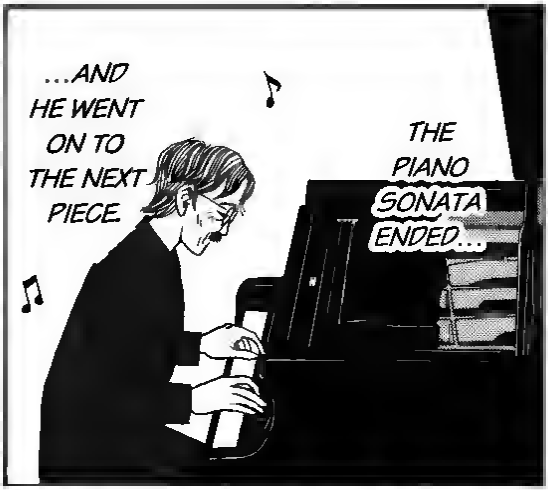
IT WAS AN INCREDIBLE PERFOR-MANCE.


HE SUR-RENDERED HIMSELF TO THE MOMENT.
♫ THE SOUNDS FLOWED FREELY...

It's Uta.
!
Uta!
パチパチパチパチパチ
CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP
TUT
TUT
TUT
TUT
MURMUR
MURMUR
Uta!
SMILE
I'm in time for the encore!
FWUMP


FOR THE FIRST ENCORE, PROFESSOR MIKOSHIBA STARTED PLAYING ONE OF BEETHOVEN'S PIANO SONATAS.

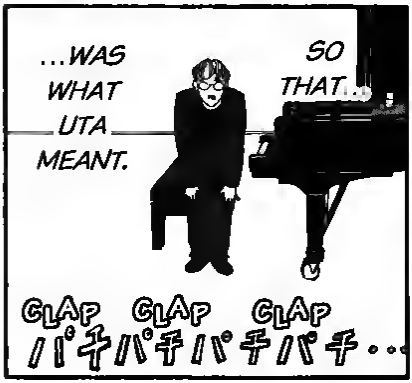

I REALIZED THAT HE WAS PLAYING THROUGH THE WHOLE PROGRAM AGAIN, JUST FOR UTA.

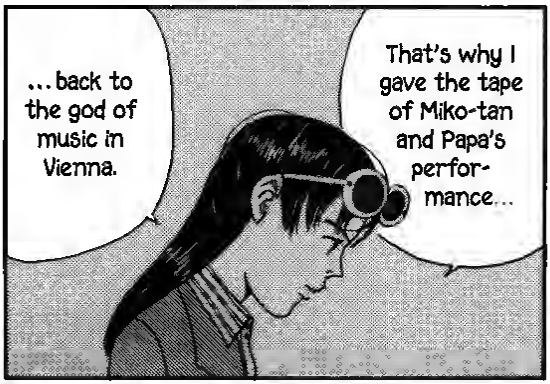

...AND HE WENT ON TO THE NEXT PIECE.
THE PIANO SONATA ENDED...

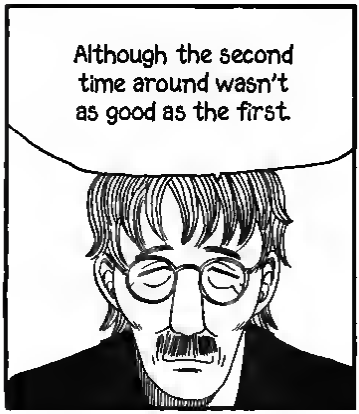
パチパチ CLAP
パチパチ CLAP
パチパチ CLAP
FWEET FWEET

I think all music returns to where it was born.

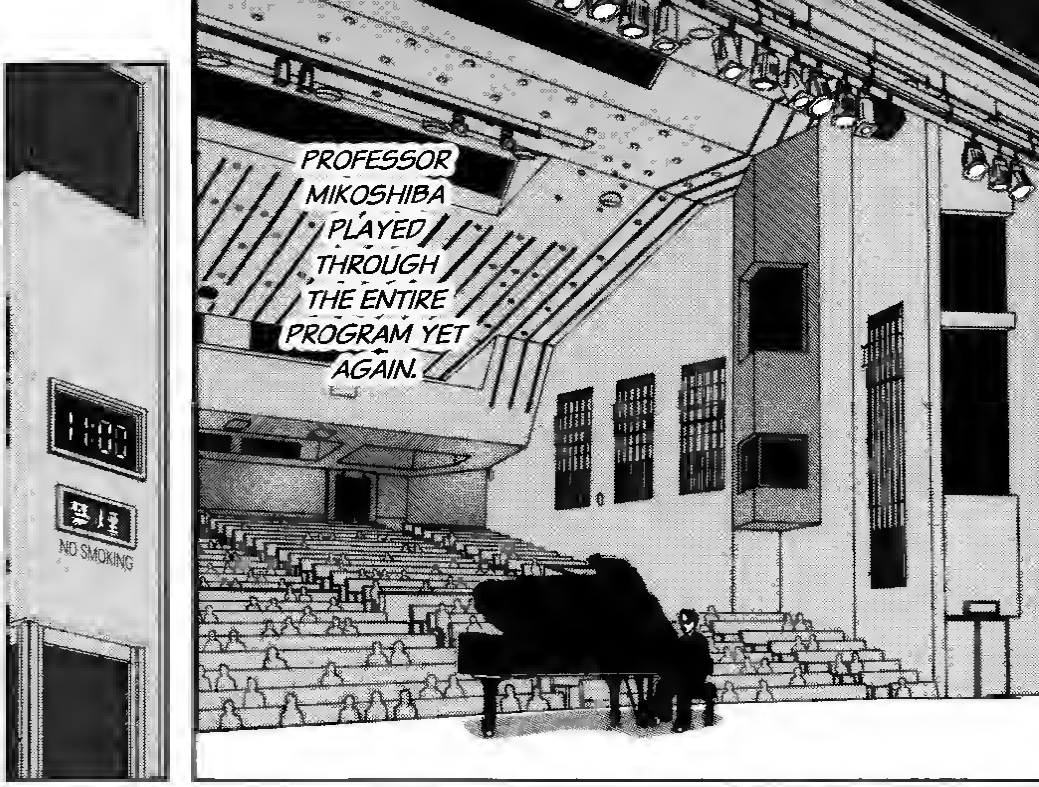
Music...
Music is born in the moment.

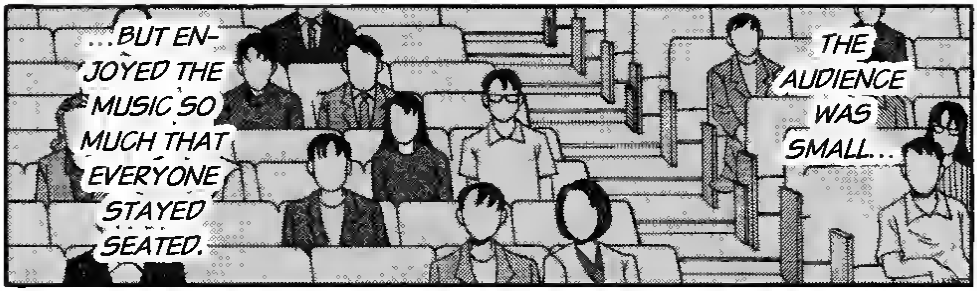

...WAS WHAT UTA MEANT.
SO THAT...
CLAP CLAP CLAP
パチパチパチパチ...

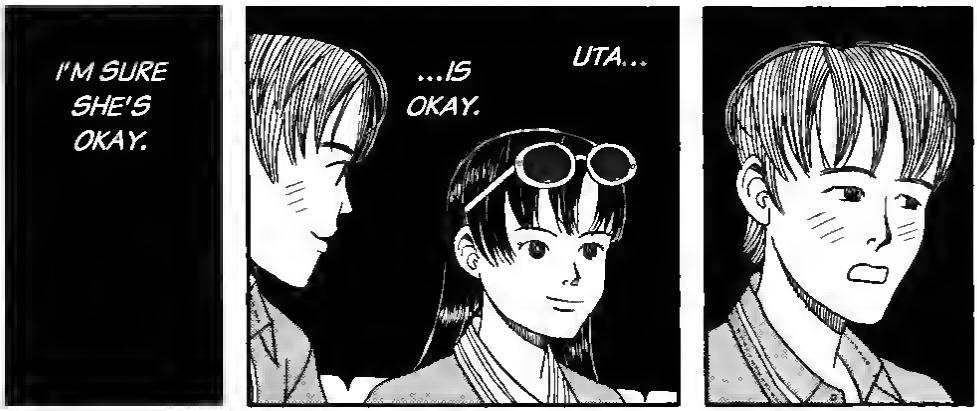

...back to the god of music in Vienna.
That's why I gave the tape of Miko-tan and Papa's performance...


Although the second time around wasn't as good as the first.

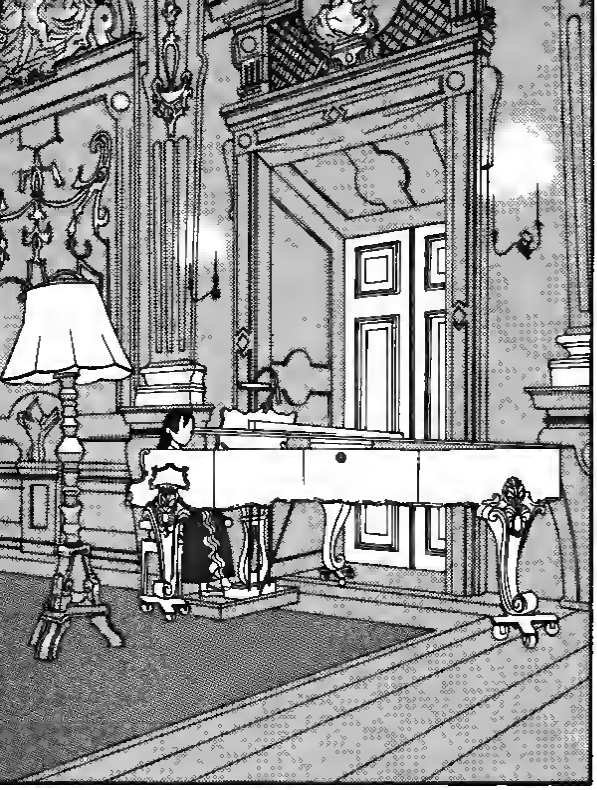
I'm having a wonderful time playing today.


PROFESSOR MIKOSHIBA PLAYED THROUGH THE ENTIRE PROGRAM YET AGAIN.
NO SMOKING

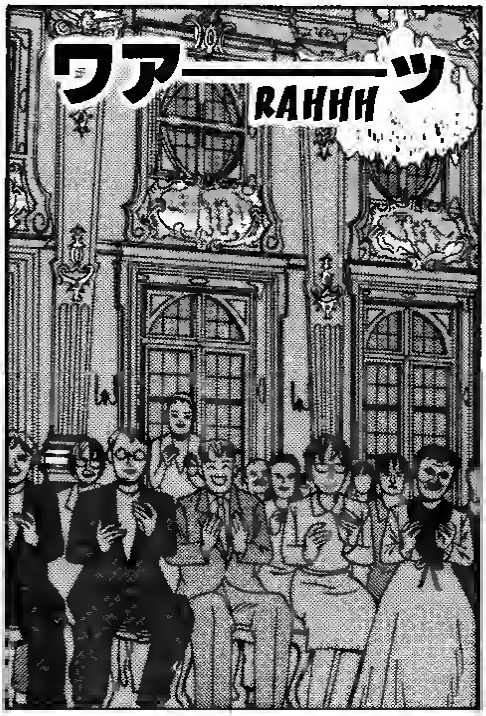

...BUT EN-JOYED THE MUSIC SO MUCH THAT EVERYONE STAYED SEATED.
THE AUDIENCE WAS SMALL...

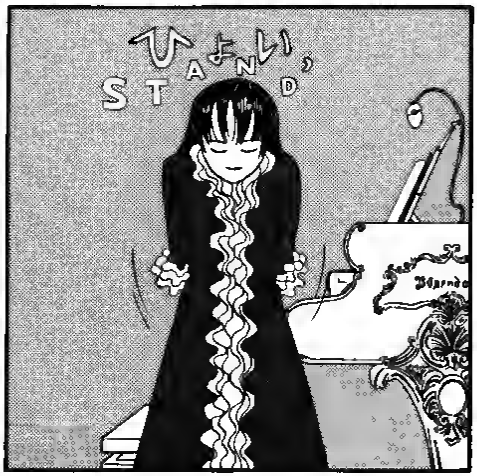

I'M SURE SHE'S OKAY.
...IS OKAY.
UTA...

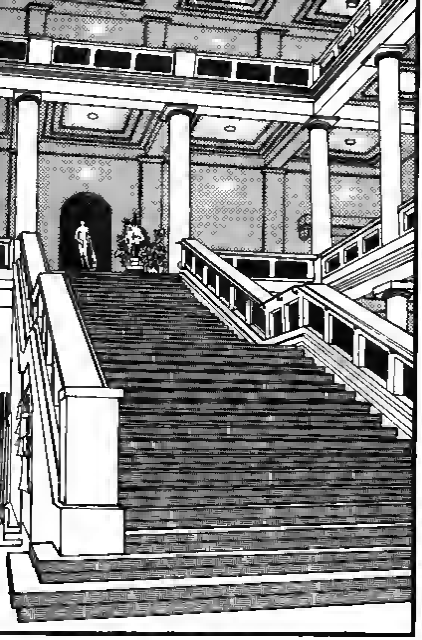
Chapter 41 The Ominous Cicadas Song



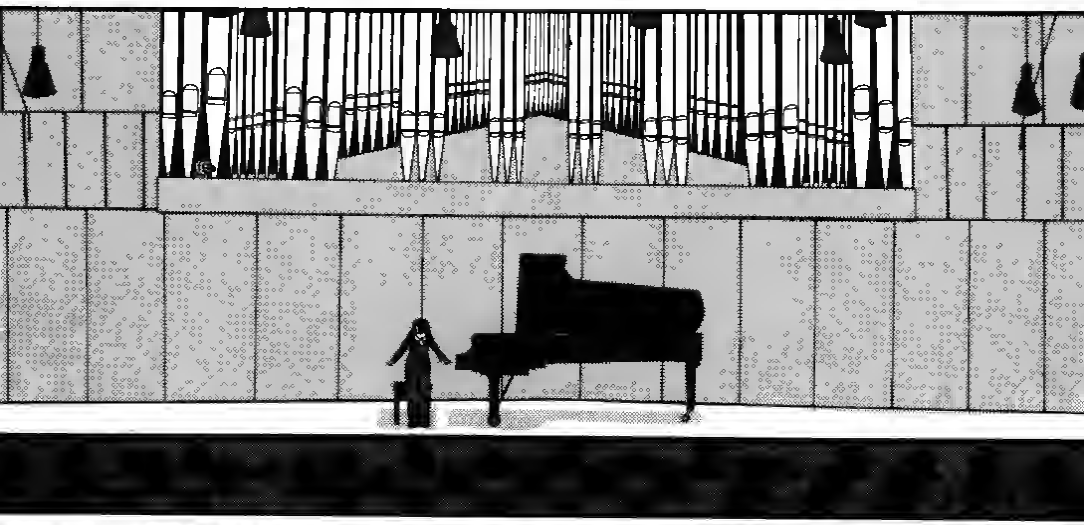
SALZBURG


ワアーーーッ
RAHHH

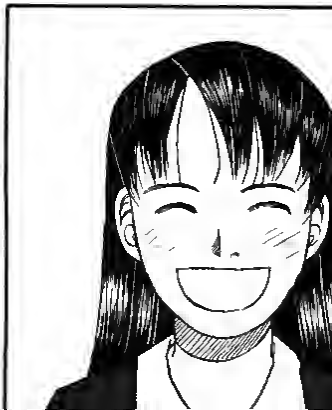

ひよい
STAND



MUNICH

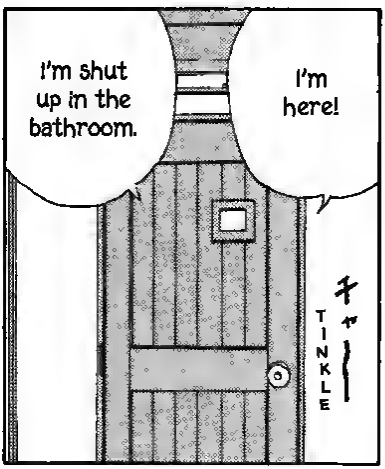


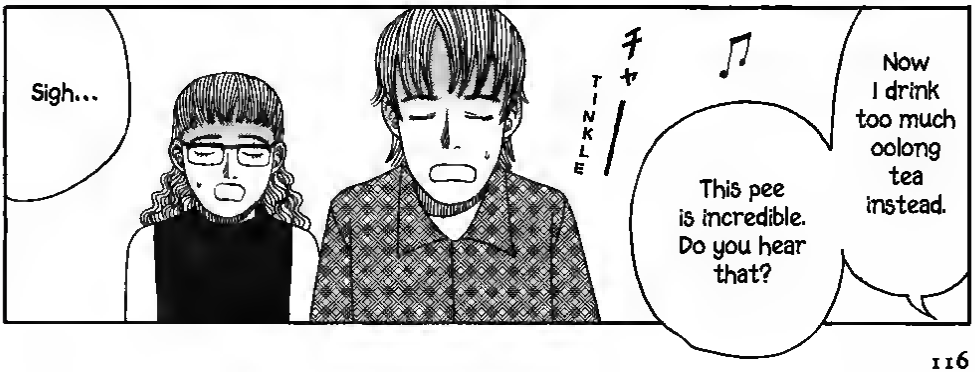
ブラボーーーーツ
BRAVO!!

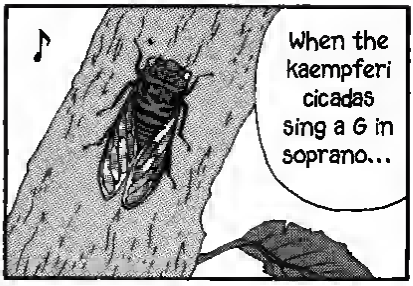


Hello!

I thought you quit drinking.
I did!
チャ
TINKLE

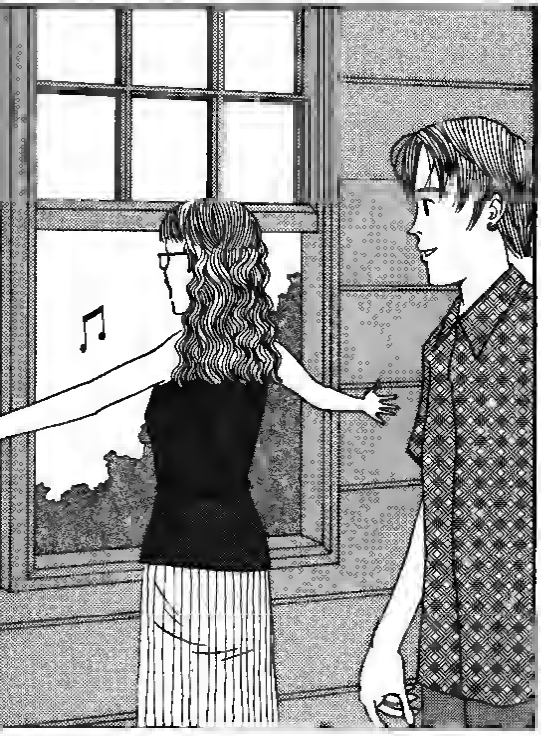

I'm here!
I'm shut up in the bathroom.
チャ
TINKLE


Now I drink too much oolong tea instead.
This pee is incredible. Do you hear that?
チャ
TINKLE
Sigh...

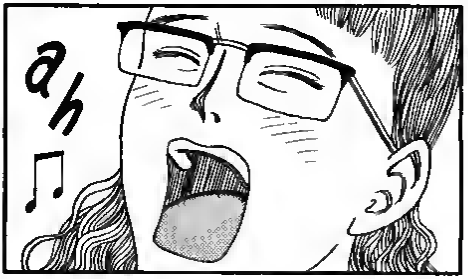

When the kaempferi cicadas sing a G in soprano...

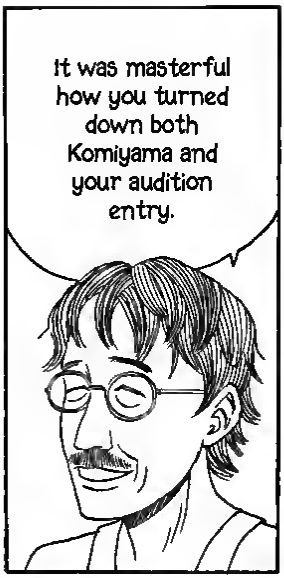
...the large brown cicadas respond with a bass C.

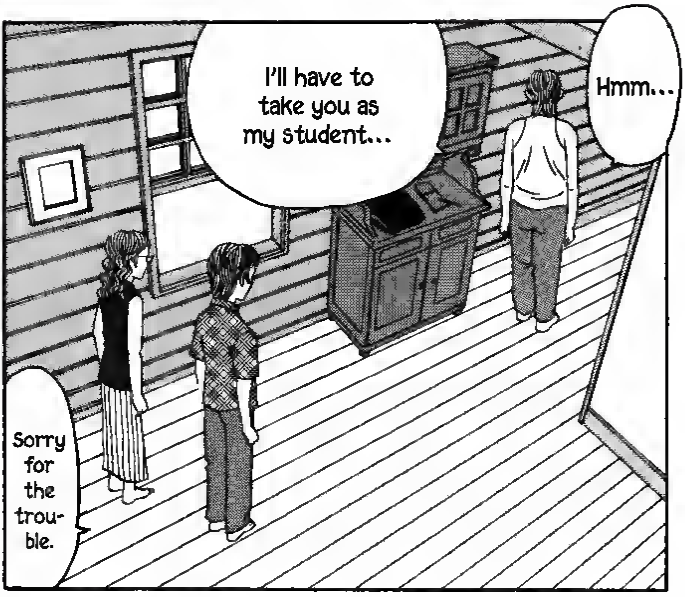
The cicadas are already out in this area.



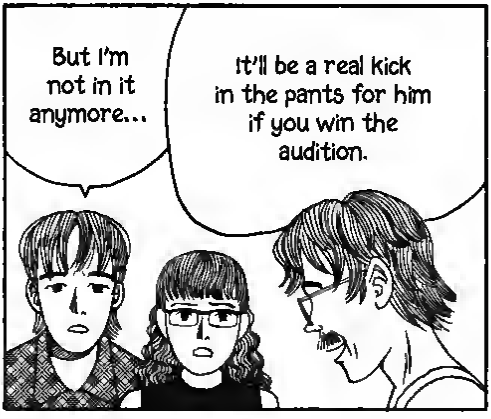
How is that splendid?
A splendid harmony!
And my pee plays an E.
TINKLE
チョー


ah

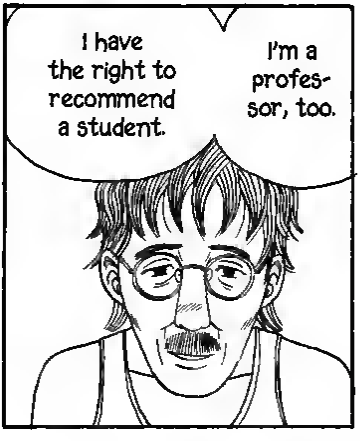

It was masterful how you turned down both Komiyama and your audition entry.

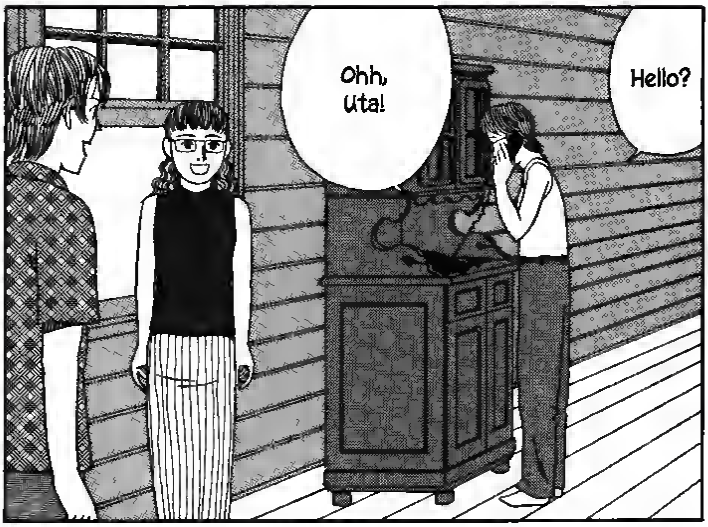

Hmm...
I'll have to take you as my student...
Sorry for the trou-ble.

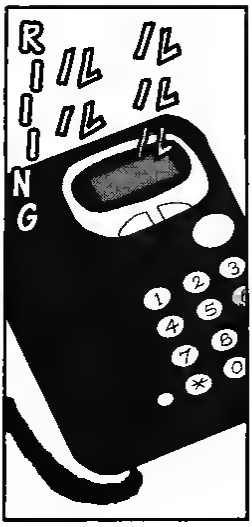
There's still time to enter.
Huh?


But I'm not in it anymore...
It'll be a real kick in the pants for him if you win the audition.

Y-
Will you do it?
So?
Yes!


I have the right to recommend a student.
I'm a profes-sor, too.


Ohh, Uta!
Hello?


RIIING
IL IL IL IL IL

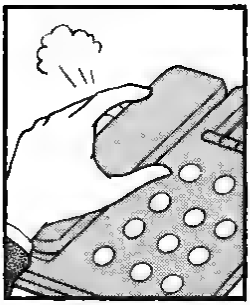
You can hear the cicadas here already.
How are you, Uta? When are you coming back?

Yes.
He's going to enter the audition again under my recommendation.
Wao's here.

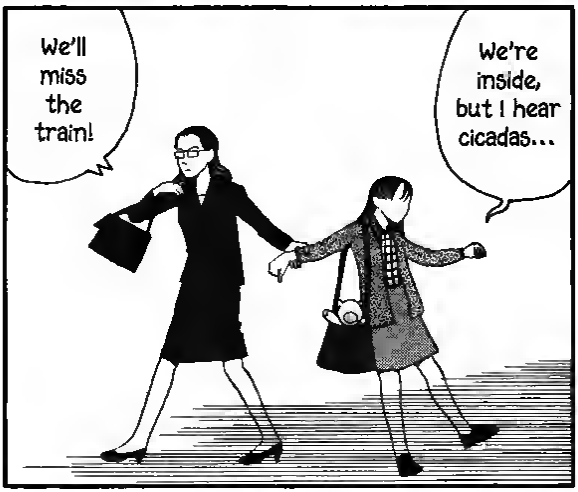
A G note... from the forest.
Sounds like a kaempferi cicada...

Same here.

Okay, okay!
You have another concert. We're going to Paris!
Uta!
I'll call you later!



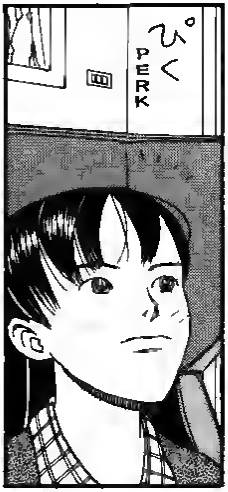
Way to put the pressure on.
You better win. Rub it in Professor Komiyama's face!


We'll miss the train!
We're inside, but I hear cicadas...

We're leaving, Uta! What are you doing?
...

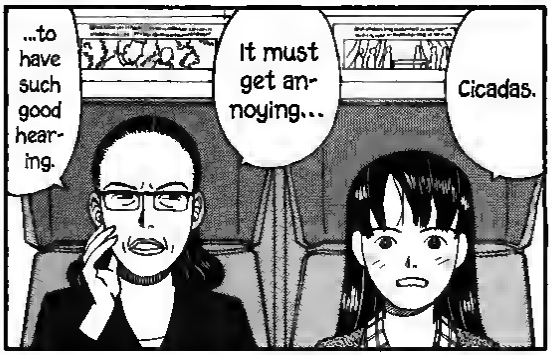
Hof
5

DB
HAUPTBAHNHOF


ぴく
PERK

This is a critical time, Uta dear. Hang in there.
Man, I'm pooped.

I can't hear them at all.


...to have such good hearing.
It must get annoying...
Cicadas.

...are inside me!
The cicadas...

Japan Pianist Competition
Audition Roster

Kozue Aihara
(Prof. Tsuboi)

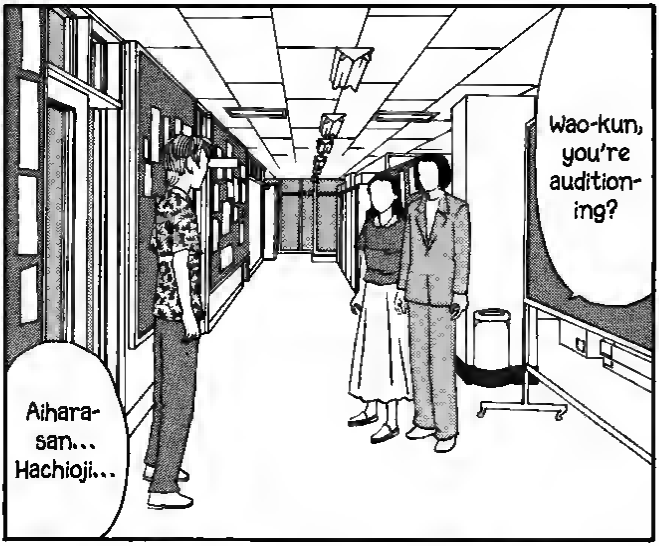
Akira Kanazawa
(Prof. Ida)

Mitsuru Hachioji
(Prof. Komiyama)

There's Hachioji... and Aihara-san, too...

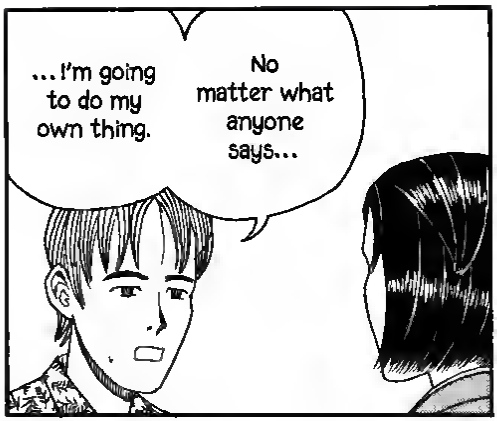
All three of us are in it together.

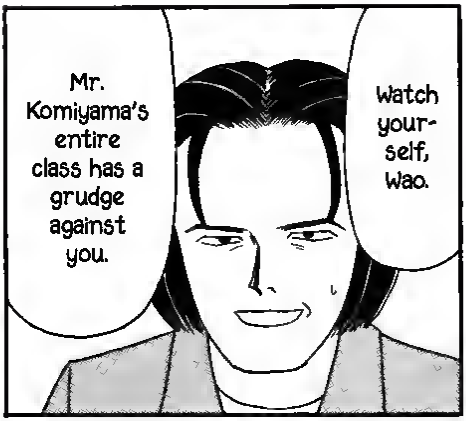
Professor Tsuboi recommended me!

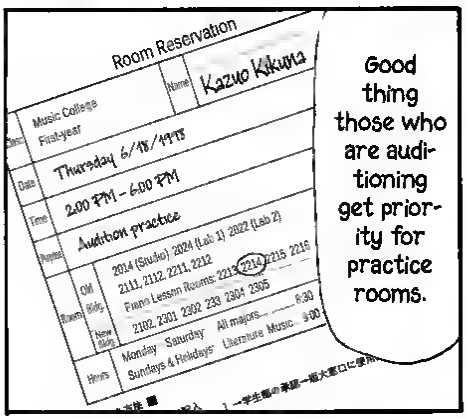


...after you withdrew.

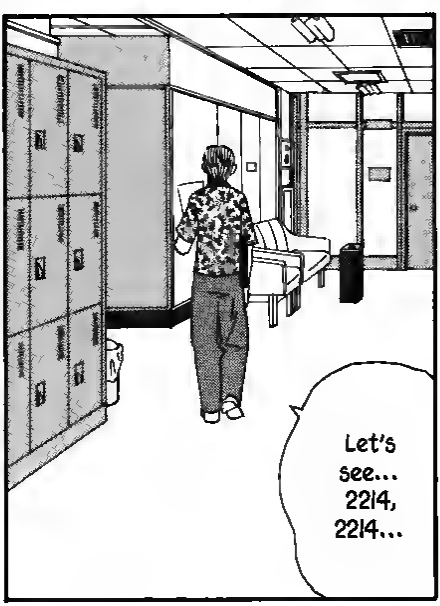
I entered...

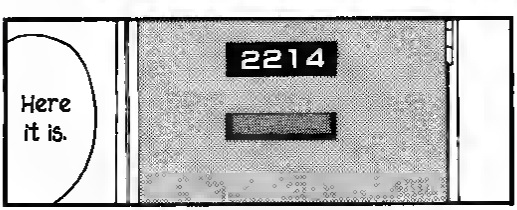

No matter what anyone says...
...I'm going to do my own thing.

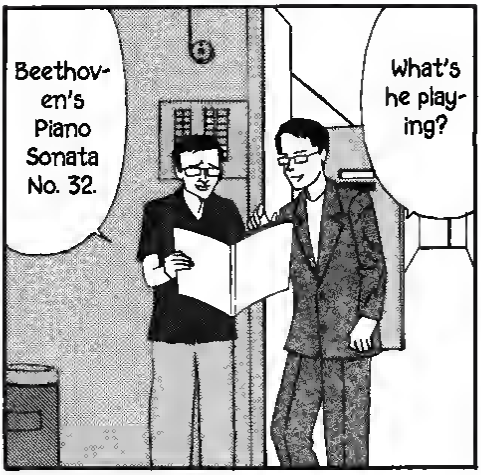

Watch yourself, Wao.
Mr. Komiyama's entire class has a grudge against you.


Room Reservation
Name: Kazuo Kikuta
Dept: Music College
Class: First-year
Date: Thursday 6/15/1995
Time: 2:00 PM – 6:00 PM
Purpose: Audition practice
Room: Old Bldg. 2014 (Studio) 2024 (Lab 1) 2022 (Lab 2) 2111, 2112, 2211, 2212
Piano Lesson Rooms: 2213, 2214, 2215, 2216
New Bldg. 2102, 2301, 2302, 2303, 2304, 2305
Hours: Monday – Saturday: All majors ... 6:30
Sundays & Holidays: Literature, Music ... 5:00
Good thing those who are auditioning get priority for practice rooms.

THUD
Whoops. Sorry.

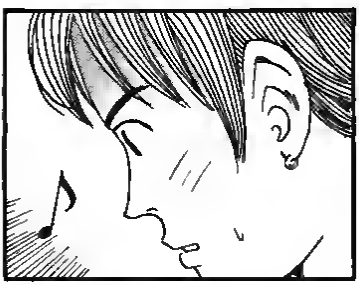

Let's see... 2214, 2214...

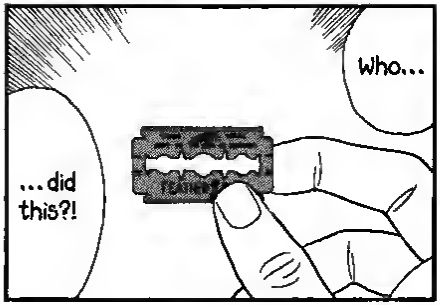

2214
Here it is.

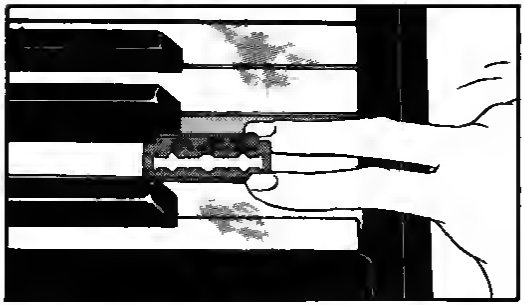

Beethoven's Piano Sonata No. 32.
What's he playing?

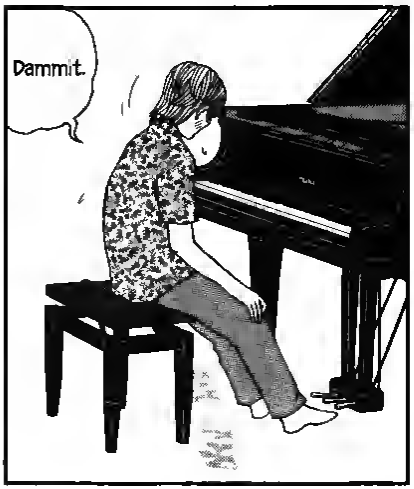
Right here.
That'll get him.

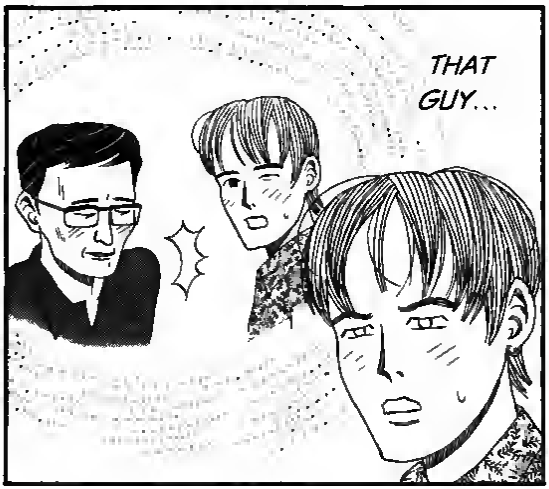
cresc

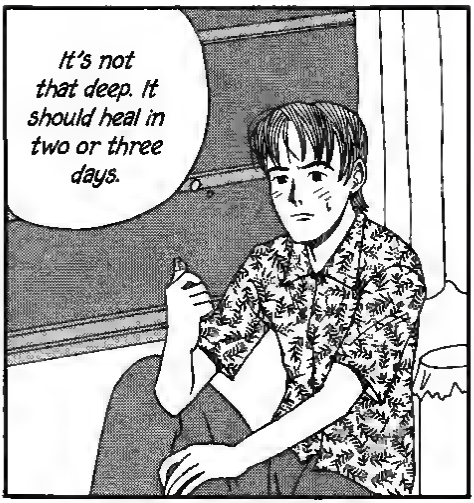


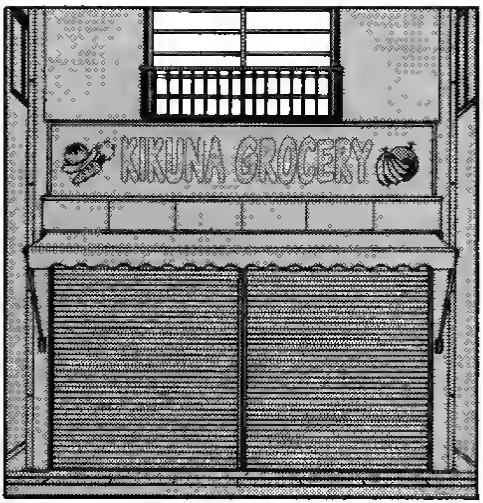

Who...
...did this?!

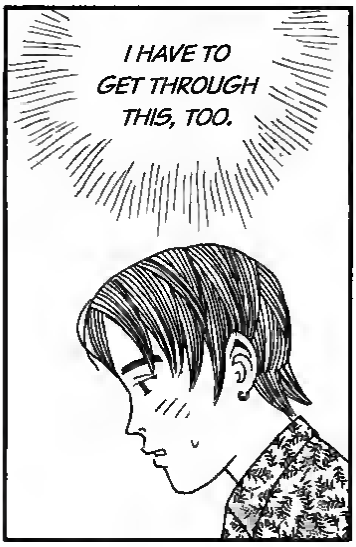


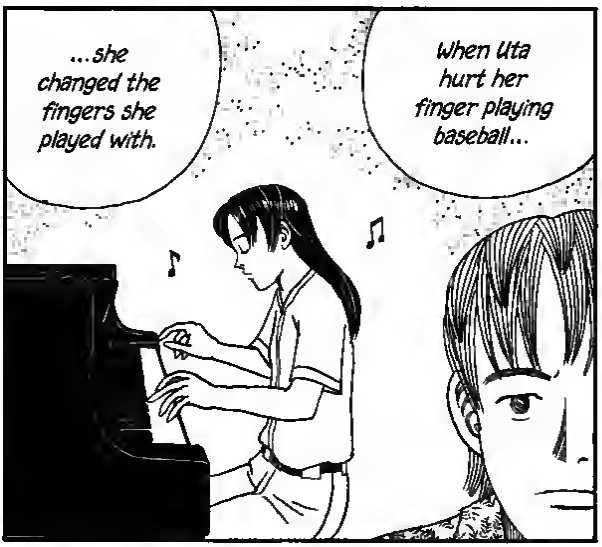

Dammit.

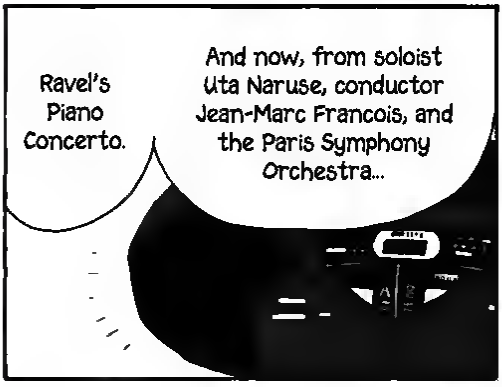

THAT GUY...

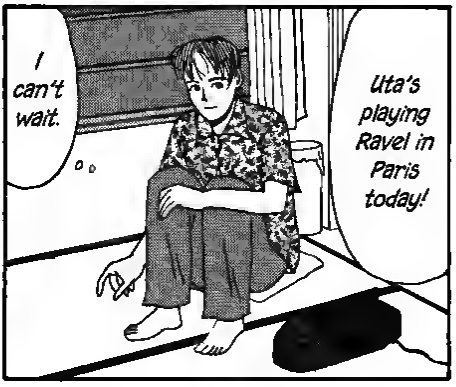

It's not that deep. It should heal in two or three days.


KIKUNA GROCERY


I HAVE TO GET THROUGH THIS, TOO.

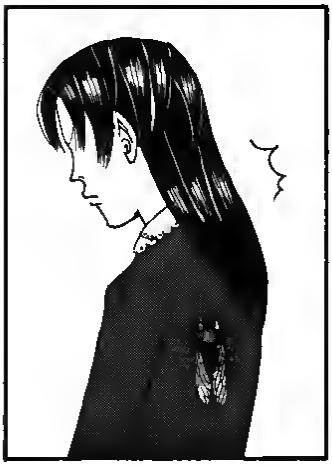

...she changed the fingers she played with.
When Uta hurt her finger playing baseball...


Ravel's Piano Concerto.
And now, from soloist Uta Naruse, conductor Jean-Marc Francois, and the Paris Symphony Orchestra...

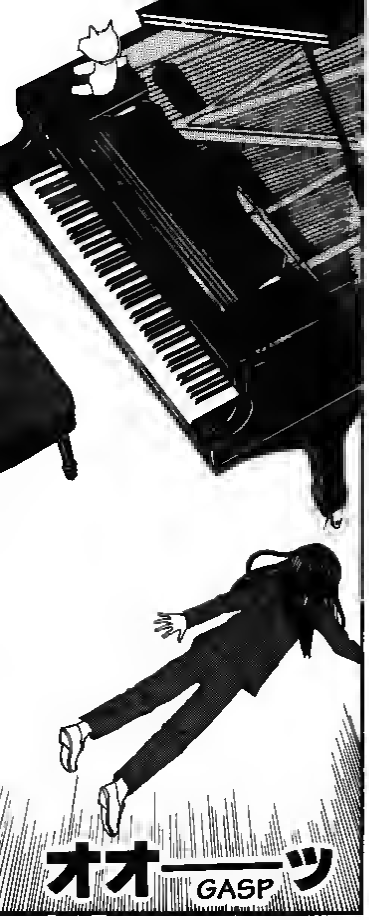

I can't wait.
Uta's playing Ravel in Paris today!

Uta...
It's great!

What an incredible speed!
Haha!



Huh?
カタカタカタ：
TREMBLE TREMBLE TREMBLE


オオーッ
GASP

Uta!

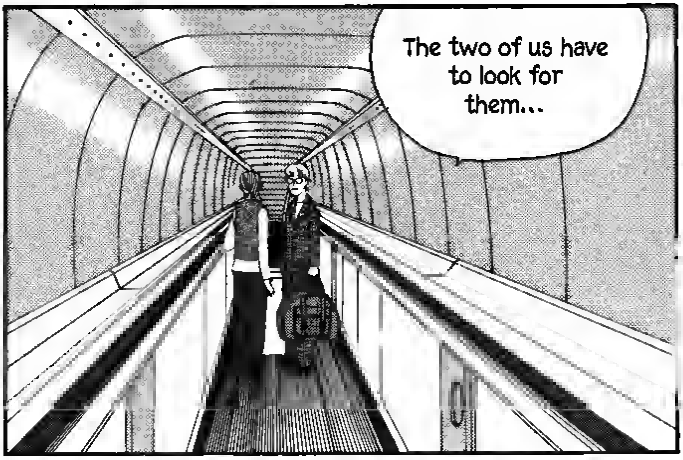
What happened?!
Uta's sound!
u-

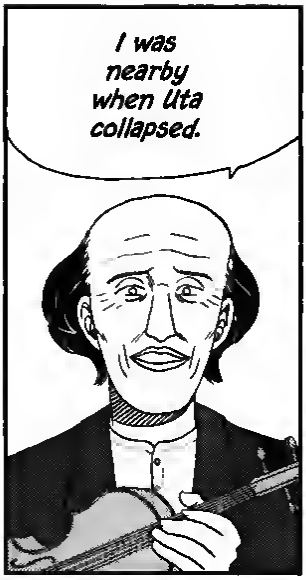
Chapter 42 The Dizzy, Nauseous and Deaf Song

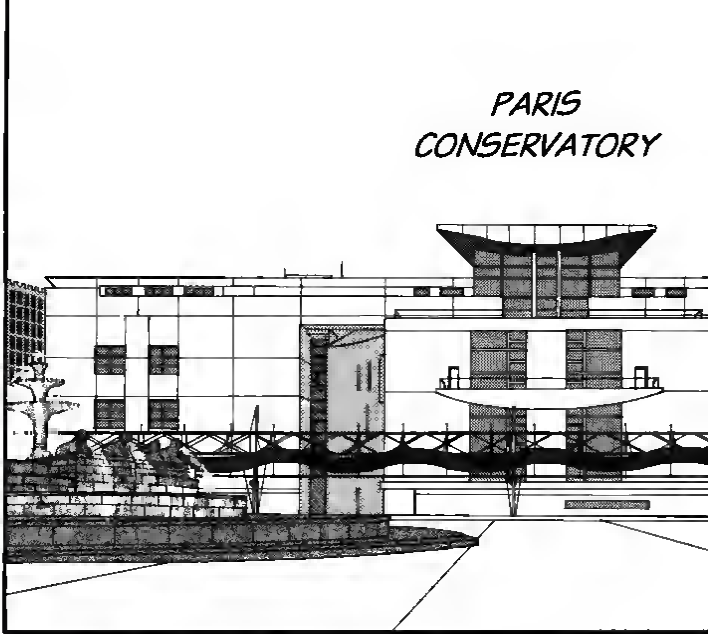
CHARLES DE GAULLE AIRPORT, PARIS
ゴォオ…
FWOOM
Taxis
Taxis
16
No.
Do you know what happened to Miss Uta?
I'm from Weekly Morning magazine's Paris branch.

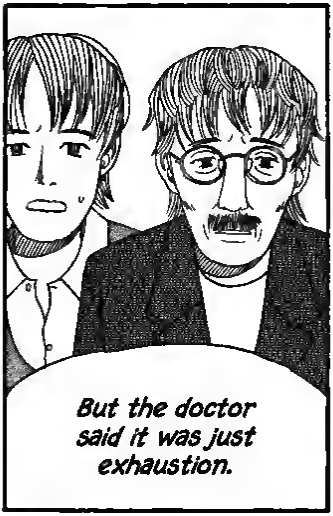
…is handled by her mother.
Uta's entire schedule, down to her hotel rooms and flights…

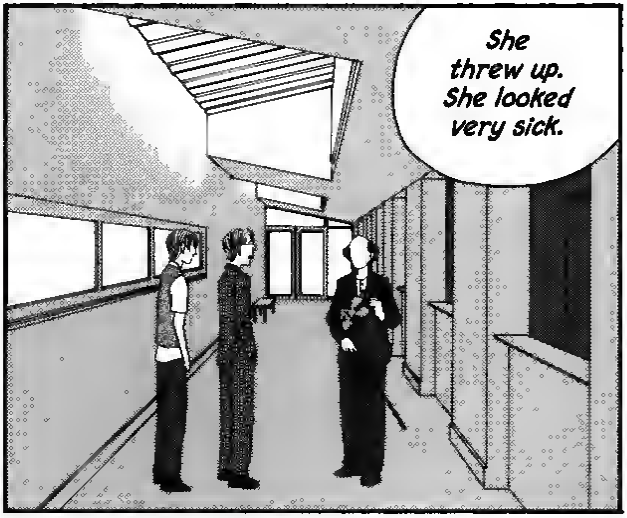
Uta… I hope it's nothing serious…


The two of us have to look for them…


I was nearby when Uta collapsed.

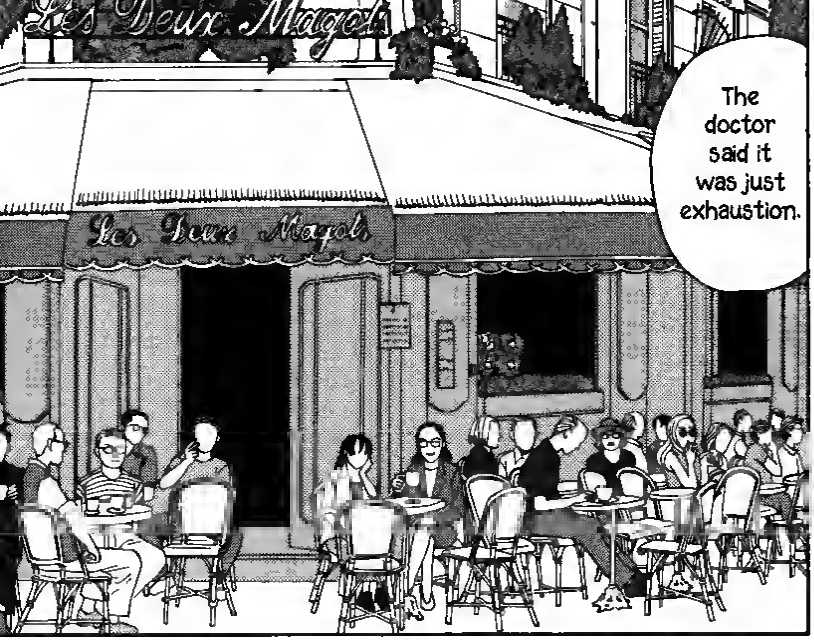

PARIS CONSERVATORY

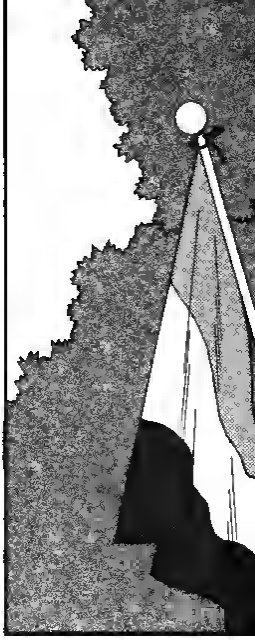

But the doctor said it was just exhaustion.


She threw up. She looked very sick.

It sounds like it wasn't serious, at least.

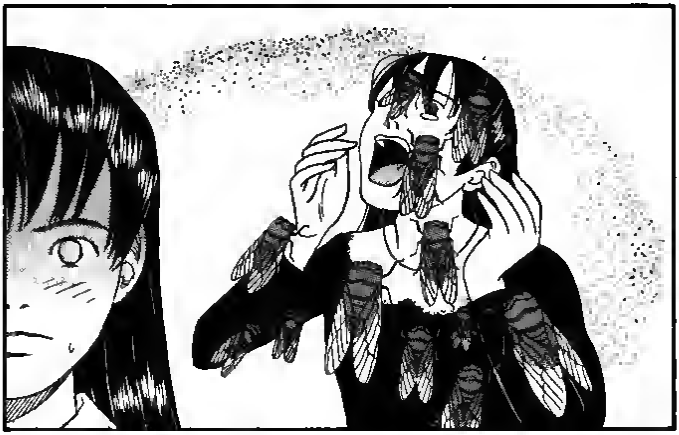
When I went to visit her in the hospital the next day, Uta had already been released.


Les Deux Magots
Les Deux Magots
The doctor said it was just exhaustion.



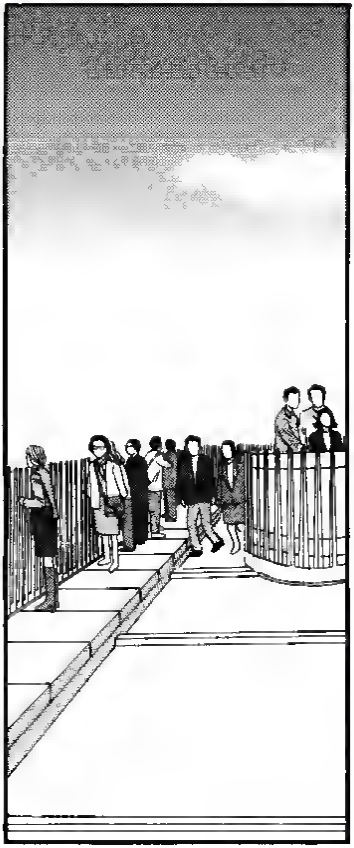
I shouldn't have made such a tight schedule.
I didn't consider your energy.
I'm sorry, Uta.

Ho ho ho!
Well, now we can have a well-earned rest.

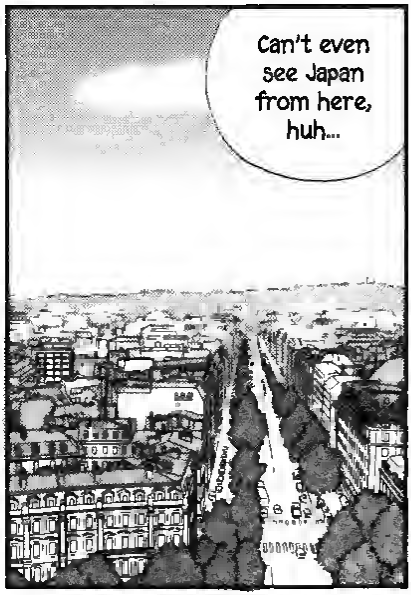


I'm better already.

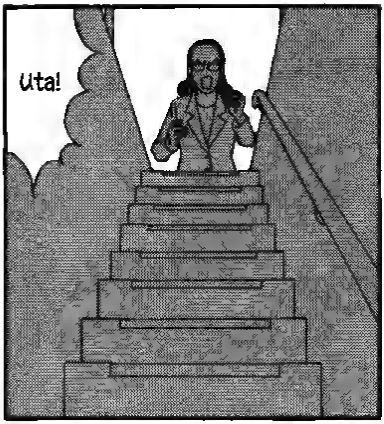
I have to be strong, so Uta can be, too!
Uta...
Something's weighing on her mind!
Well, then! Let's see Paris...
...and splurge on name brand goods!
You're so strong, Mama.
Wao.
Don't forget about your audition. Buy a plane ticket back to Japan for tomorrow.
Right...

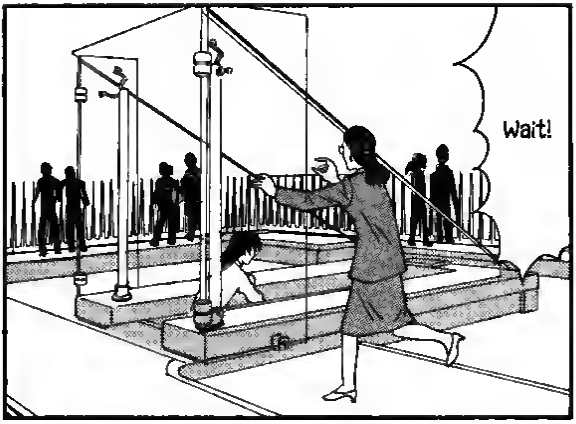


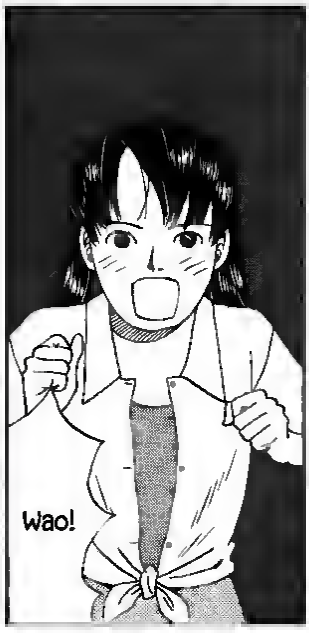
Our home won't be quiet...
I bet the media will bug us when we get back.
...ever again...


Can't even see Japan from here, huh...

Yes, yes. Let's.
We can buy vegetables from Wao's place!
And make stew.
I know! Let's go back to that dinky apartment!
What?
It's Wao!
Huh?
Haha... You can joke around even in Paris.
I thought I heard Uta...
What is it, Wao?
?

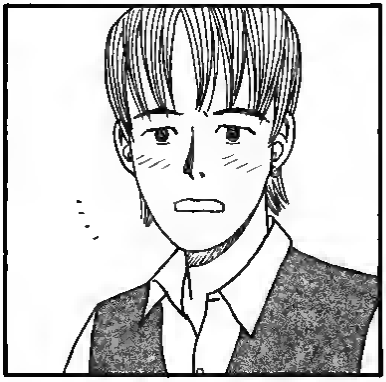

Uta!


Wait!


Wao!

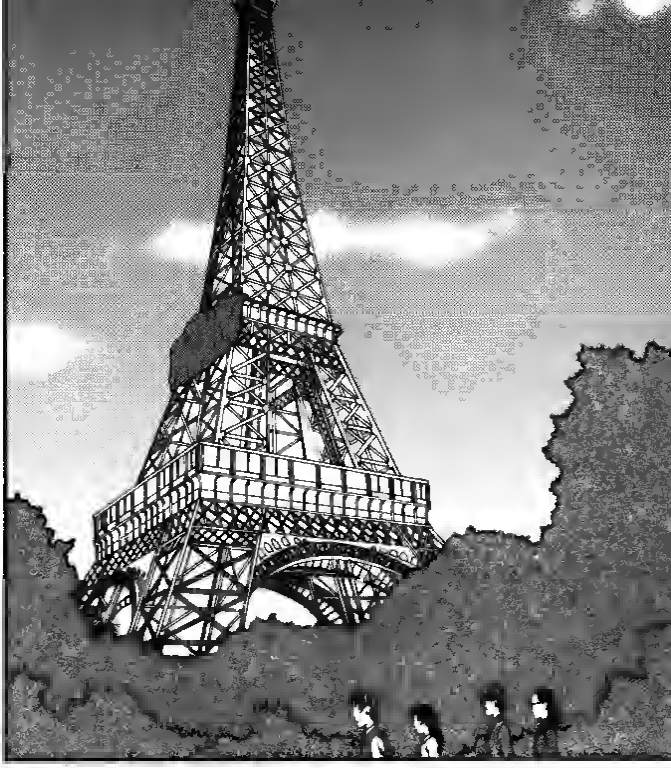
Uta!
CLANGCLANGCLANG

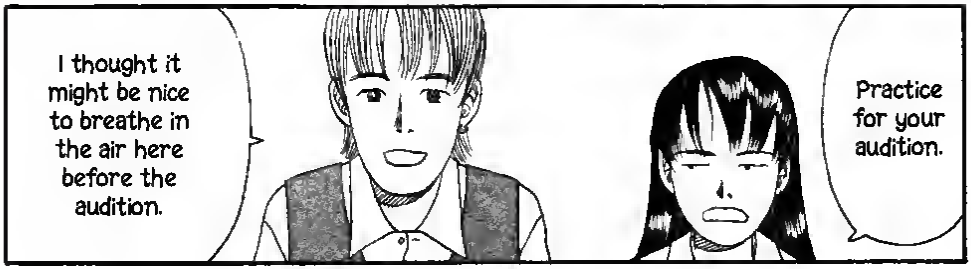
I just heard...
Stop, Professor.



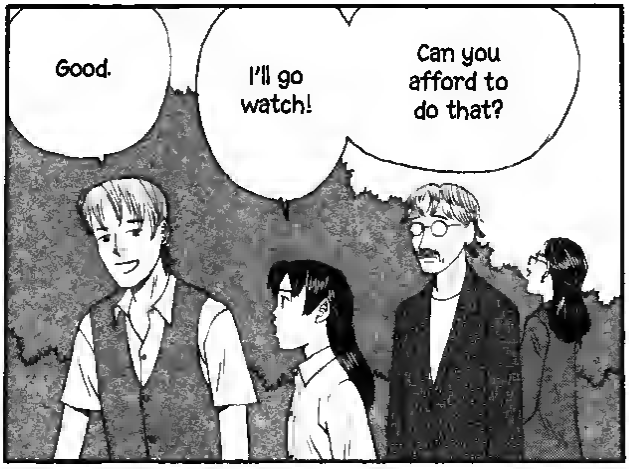
Wao!

You came all the way to Paris to check on me?
That's so stupid.

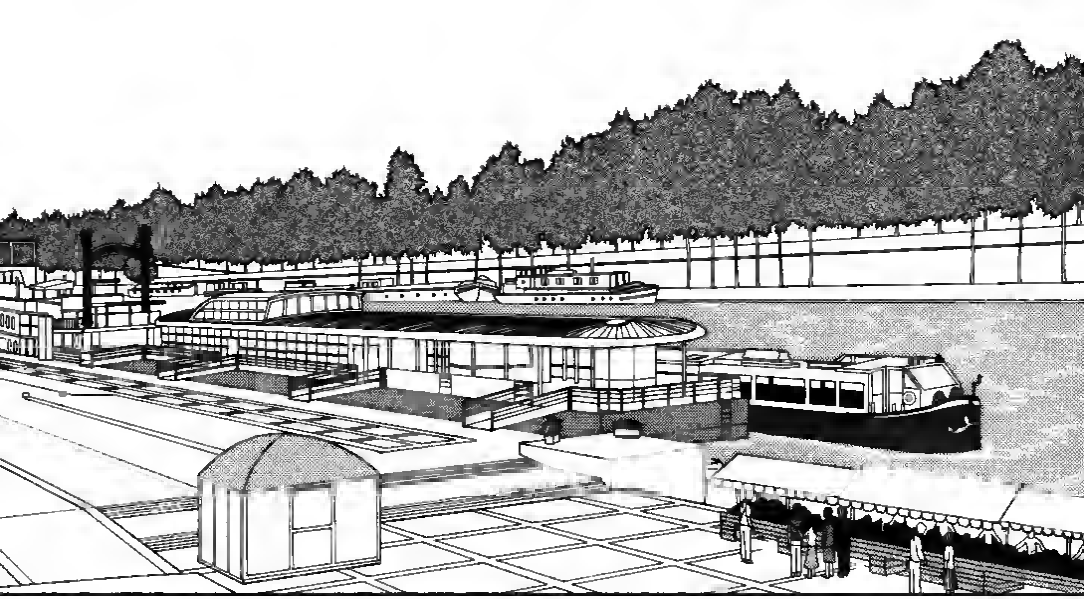



I thought it might be nice to breathe in the air here before the audition.
Practice for your audition.

I want you to hear it.

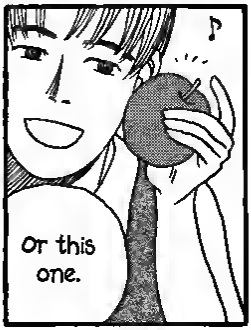

Good.
I'll go watch!
Can you afford to do that?

...I think I've come to understand my own sound.
But since meeting Professor Mikoshiba and Kanon...
For a long time, I was insistent on playing piano without your influence.
Good.
...
Huh.
And I want you to hear it.
...come hear it.
I'll definitely...



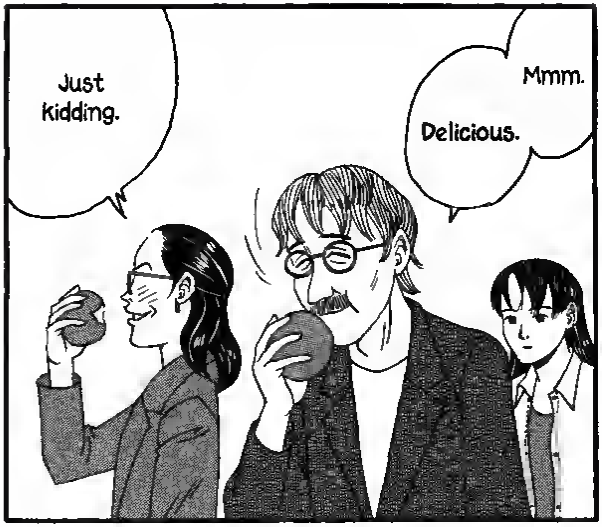
Bon-jour.
I want one!
Pick me a good apple!

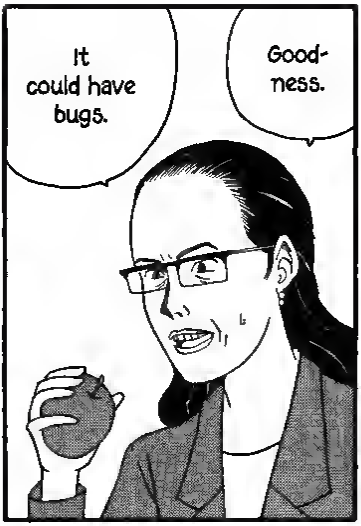
Oh.
Hey, grocer!

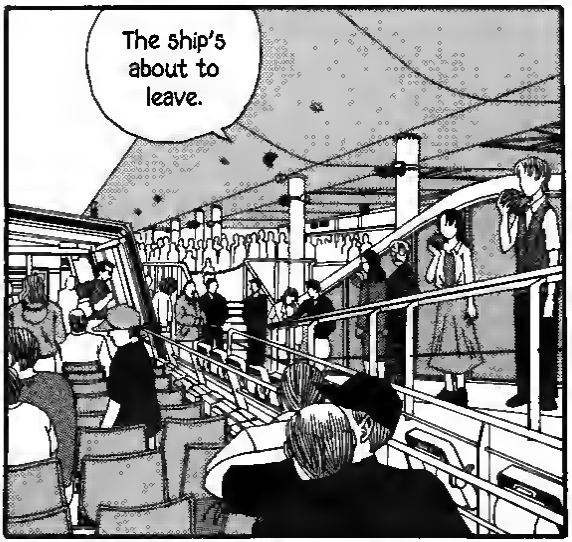

Or this one.

Maybe this one...

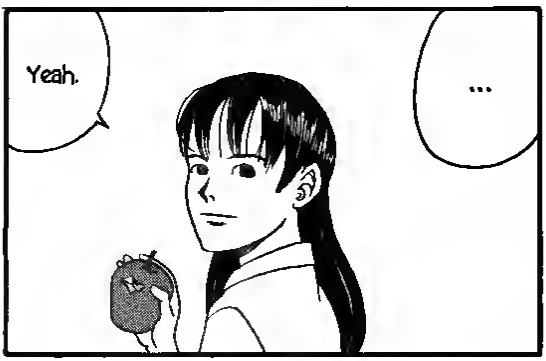
...will work on apples.
I wonder if my ears ...


Just kidding.
Mmm. Delicious.


It could have bugs.
Good-ness.

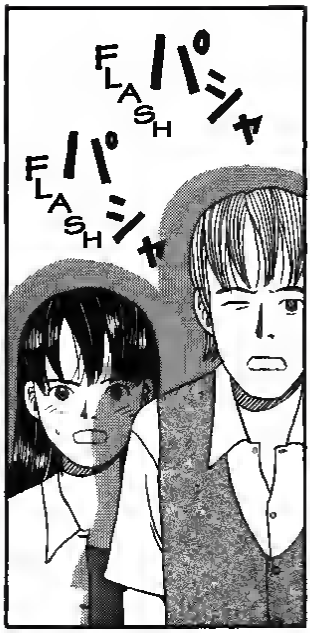

The ship's about to leave.

CRUNCH
サク…


Yeah.
…

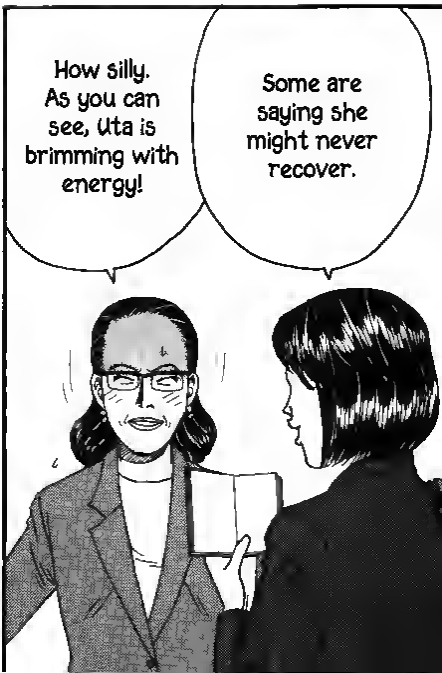
Good, right?

...WAO'S SOUND FROM THE APPLE HE GAVE ME.
BEFORE...
...I COULD FEEL...
...WAO'S SOUND.
I DON'T HEAR...
I DON'T HEAR IT.
FLASH
パシャッ


パシャ
FLASH
パシャ
FLASH

Have you recov-ered?!
Miss Uta?

パシャ
FLASH
パシャ
FLASH
Uta...?

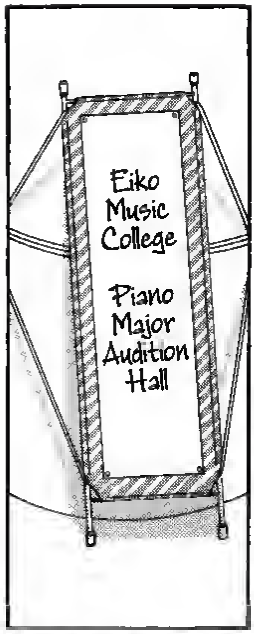

How silly. As you can see, Uta is brimming with energy!
Some are saying she might never recover.

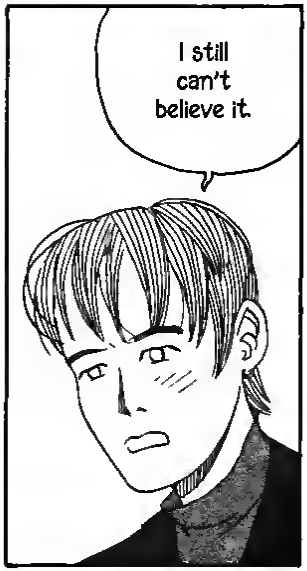
?!
Bleeeeh...
She gets seasick...
Ho ho...
Don't touch me!
Bleh!
Bleh...
Don't touch my head!
Don't touch me!

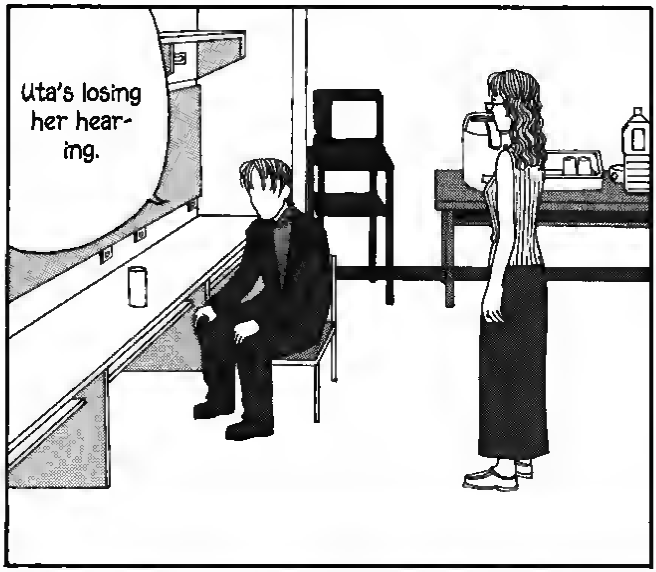
Uta!
She'll have attacks when her surroundings suddenly change, or when she's under a lot of stress.
Cela concerne l'etat d'une maladie de mademoiselle Uta...
Concerning Mademoiselle Uta's condition...
She needs rest in a quiet environment.

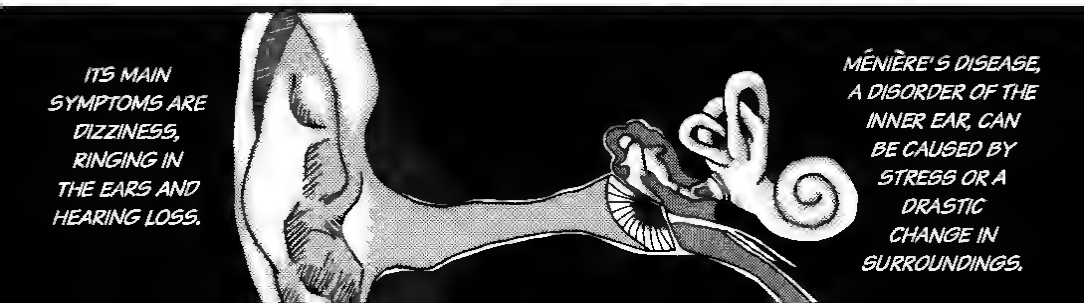
I suspect it may be Ménière's disease.
With each attack...
...she'll suffer hearing loss.
What did he say?
Professor...
...results in more attacks.
It will be problematic if stress over losing her hearing...

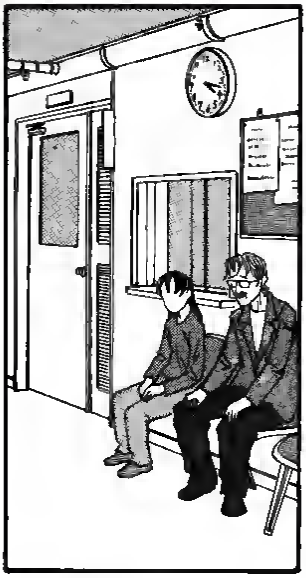
Chapter 43 The Sunset Song

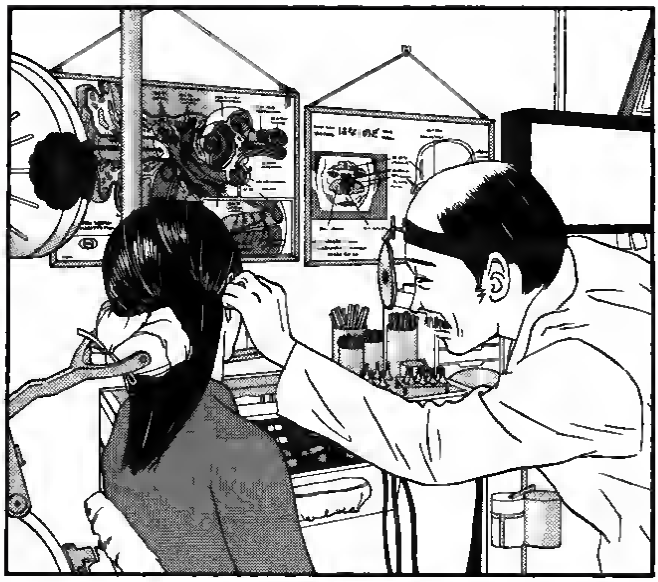

Eiko
Music
College
Piano
Major
Audition
Hall


I still can't believe it.


Uta's losing her hearing.

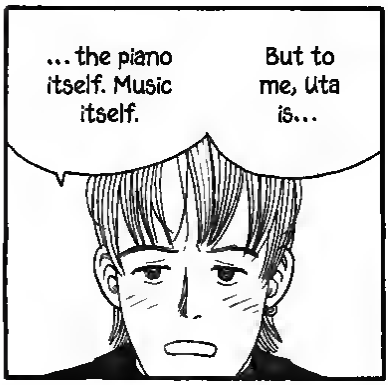

ITS MAIN SYMPTOMS ARE DIZZINESS, RINGING IN THE EARS AND HEARING LOSS.
MÉNIÈRE'S DISEASE, A DISORDER OF THE INNER EAR, CAN BE CAUSED BY STRESS OR A DRASTIC CHANGE IN SURROUNDINGS.





In Miss Naruse's case, she's at risk of going deaf.
Although it's rare, the attacks can result in complete hearing loss.

THE DIZZINESS IS VERTIGO. IT CAN GET SO SEVERE THAT MERELY MOVING YOUR HEAD CAUSES NAUSEA.


... the piano itself. Music itself.
But to me, Uta is...

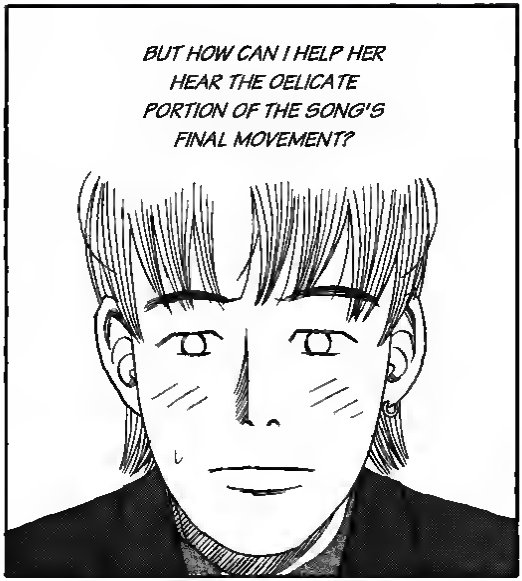
I know.
Wao, you have to concentrate on your audition now, not on Uta-chan.

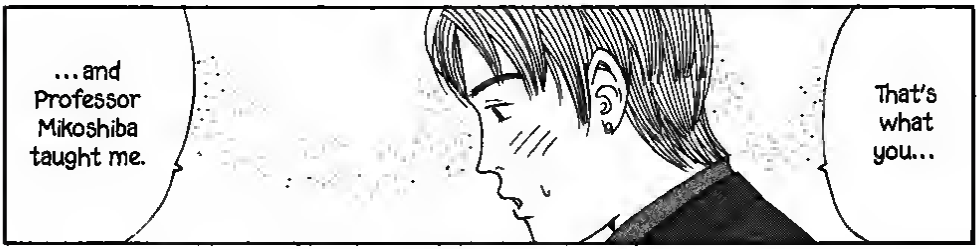
Wao!
バ
BAM
ン
TONK TONK TONK
Uta!
I love the last variation.
You're playing Beethoven's final sonata?
Uta...
Why are you...?
Heh! I'm here to put the pressure on.

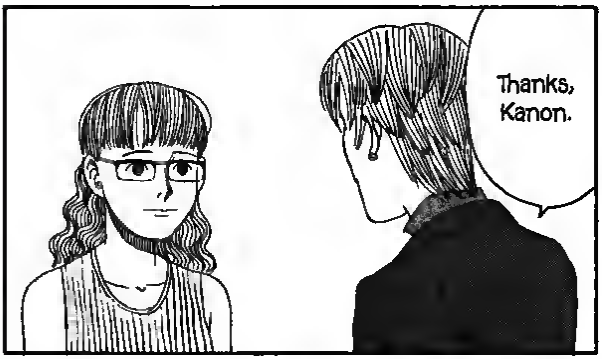
... the sky turns into a bunch of colors, just as the sun starts to go down?
You know how on nights when the sky's super clear...
Can you capture that with your piano, Wh-What?
That's the feeling it gives me.
I'll be listening from the audience!
Later!
Can you hear?
Uta...
...
バタン
CLICK

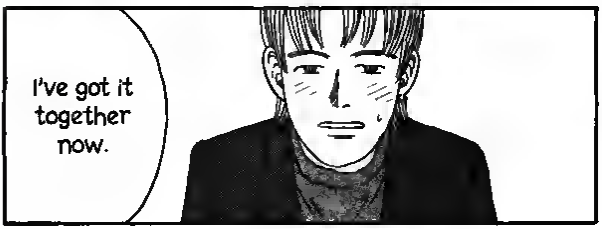
As long as she can still hear a little, I have to reach her ears.
Not much.
She can't hear.
Uta...
...FROM ALL SOUND.
BEFORE SHE'S SHUT OUT...
I KNOW. FORTE.
LIKE WHEN WE PRACTICED ON MY PIANO. HER FORTE COULD CUT THROUGH THE SKY.
How can I reach her?
What do I do?
Wao...

...before you can produce a sound that can be heard in every corner of the concert hall. It's the same for singing.
They say it takes 10 years...


BUT HOW CAN I HELP HER HEAR THE DELICATE PORTION OF THE SONG'S FINAL MOVEMENT?

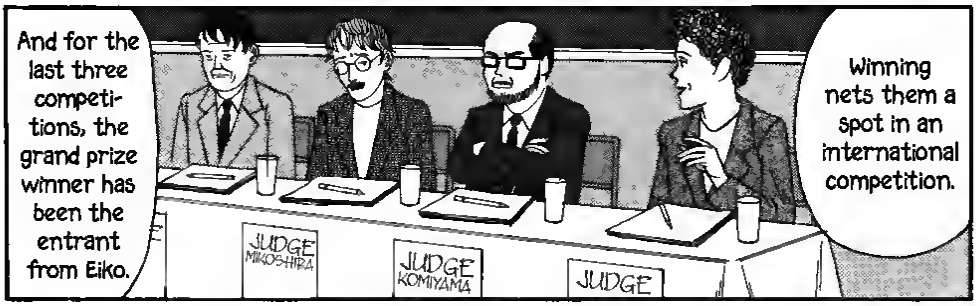

...and Professor Mikoshiba taught me.
That's what you...


Thanks, Kanon.

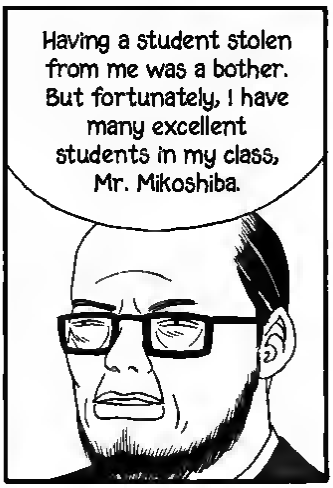

I've got it together now.

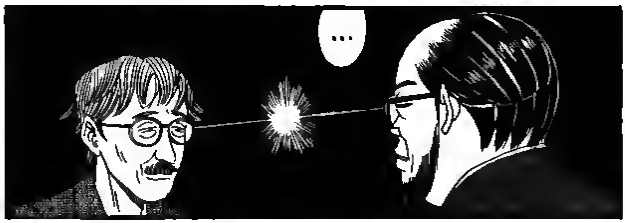
HOW TO BECOME ONE WITH THE INSTRUMENT, AND DRAW THE SOUND OUT FROM THE CORE OF YOUR BODY...

The air's so tense.
Well, this is the biggest event on campus.


And for the last three competitions, the grand prize winner has been the entrant from Eiko.
Winning nets them a spot in an international competition.
JUDGE MIKOSHIBA
JUDGE KOMIYAMA
JUDGE

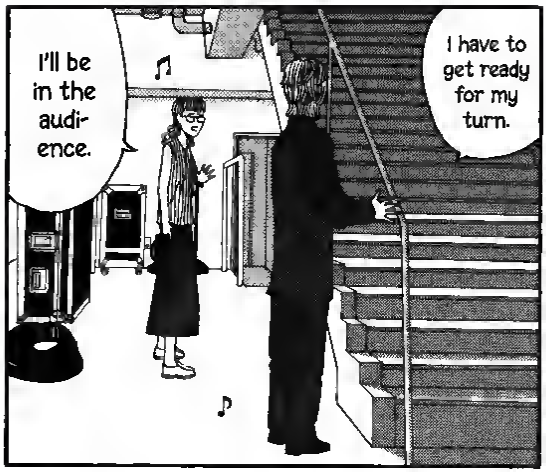
Did you teach him personally?
Hmph. And your backup student...

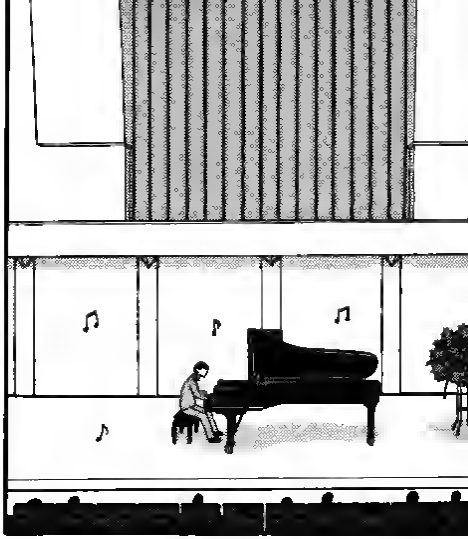

Having a student stolen from me was a bother. But fortunately, I have many excellent students in my class, Mr. Mikoshiba.

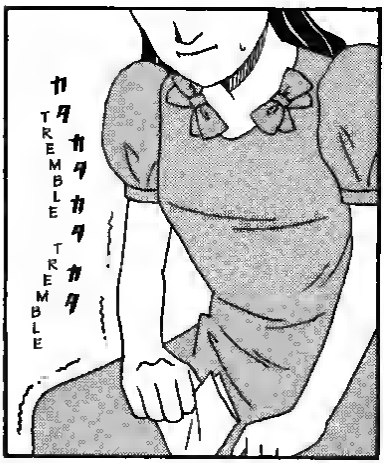

...

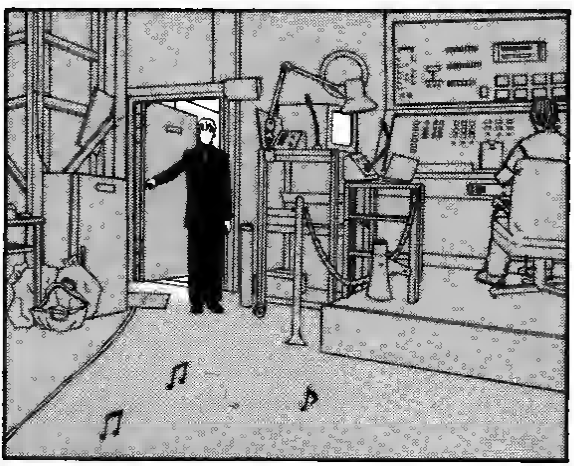
Uta Naruse.
It's Uta!
Hey.
Look!
It's a tough world out there.
SCOOP
UTA NARUSE
Did you see this week's issue of *Morning*?!
Totally shocking.
The doctor said to get some rest in a quiet place.
They're talking about you.
Why did you want to come out here?
Uta.

Don't talk like that, Uta!
Mama...
I could go deaf at any moment.
Mama.
You should rest–
Let's go home! Please?
Uta...
I want the last sound to be a good one.
There's an important sound I gotta hear.

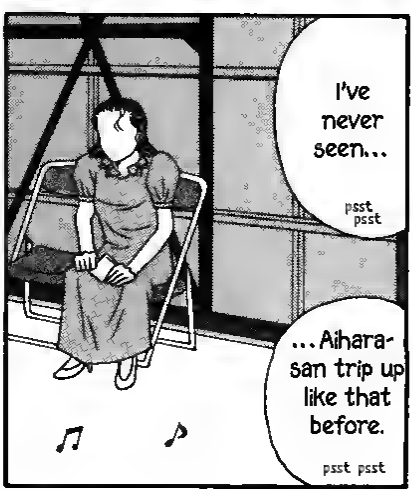

I'll be in the audience.
I have to get ready for my turn.



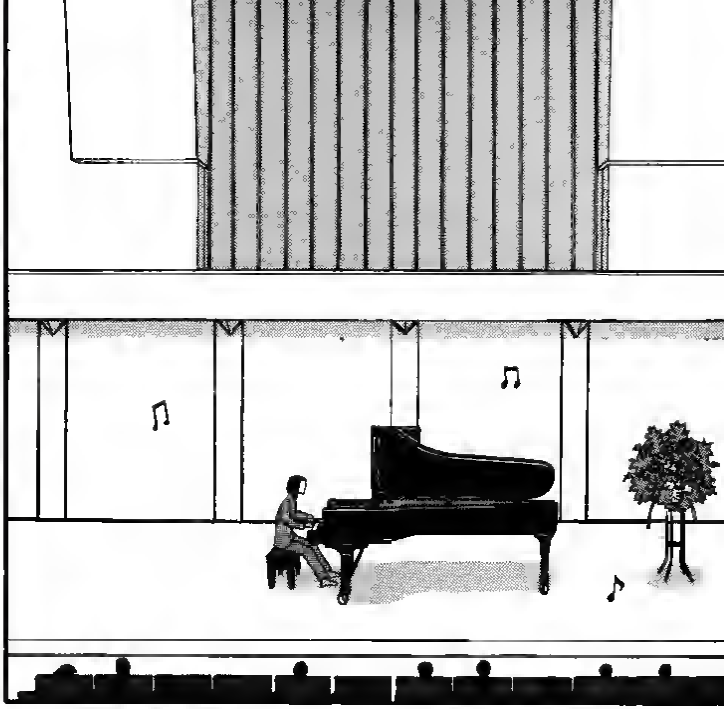

TREMBLE TREMBLE



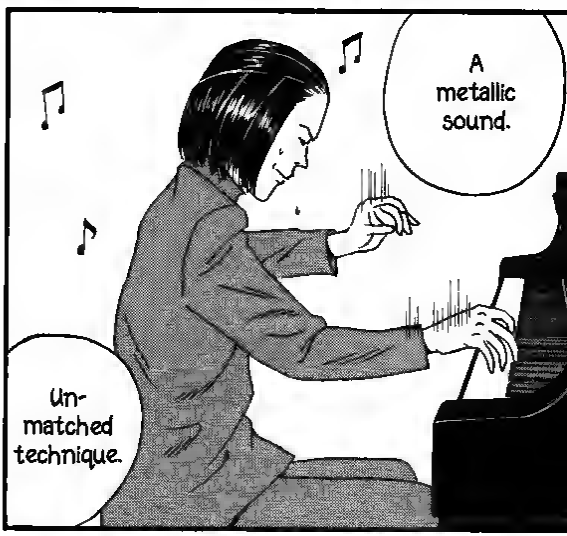
Must have been nervous.


I've never seen...
psst psst
...Aihara-san trip up like that before.
psst psst

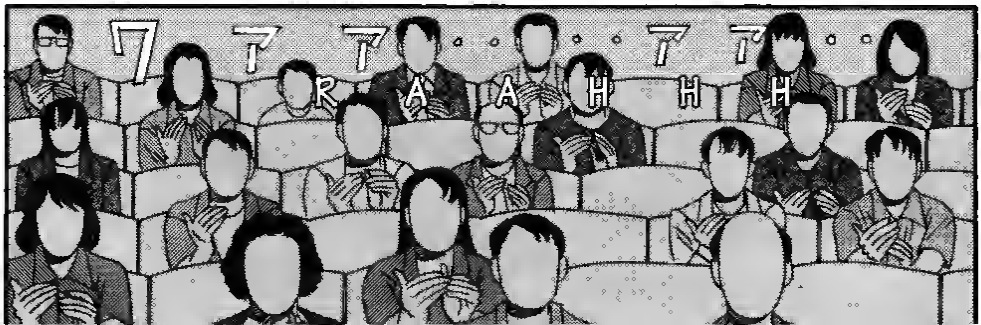
Aihara-san messed up...

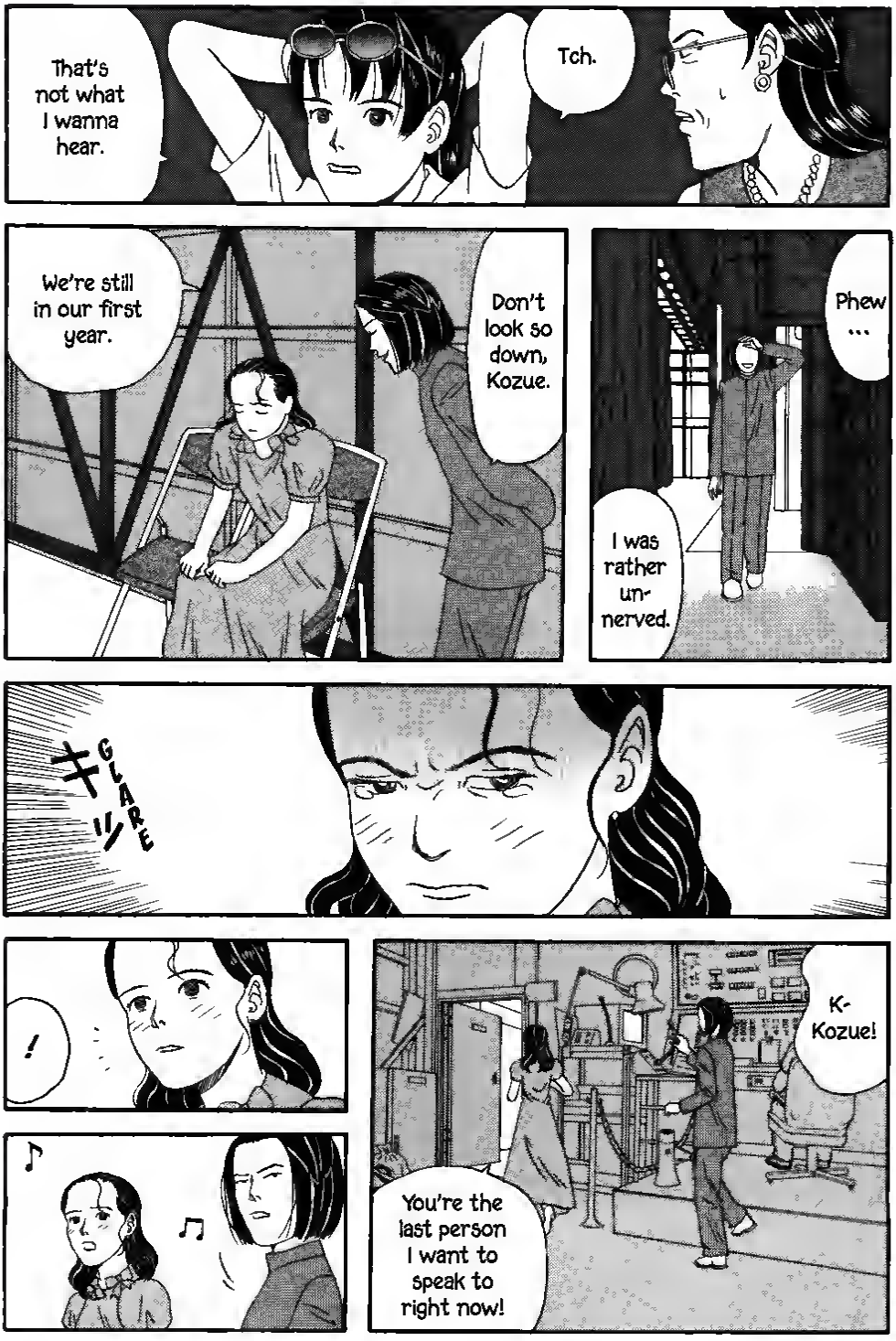


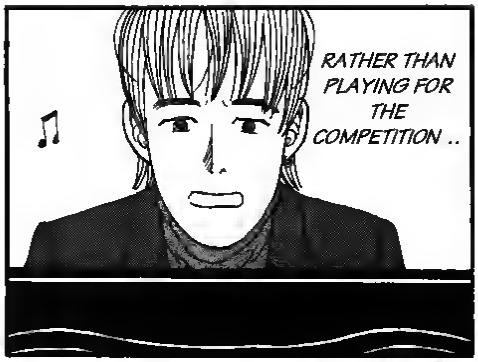
He could take the world stage!


A metallic sound.
Un-matched technique.

Yes.

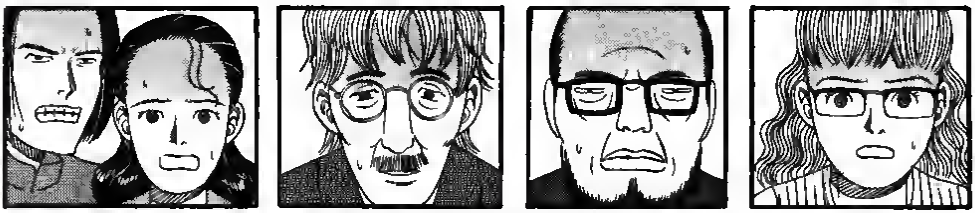

R
A
A
H
H
H

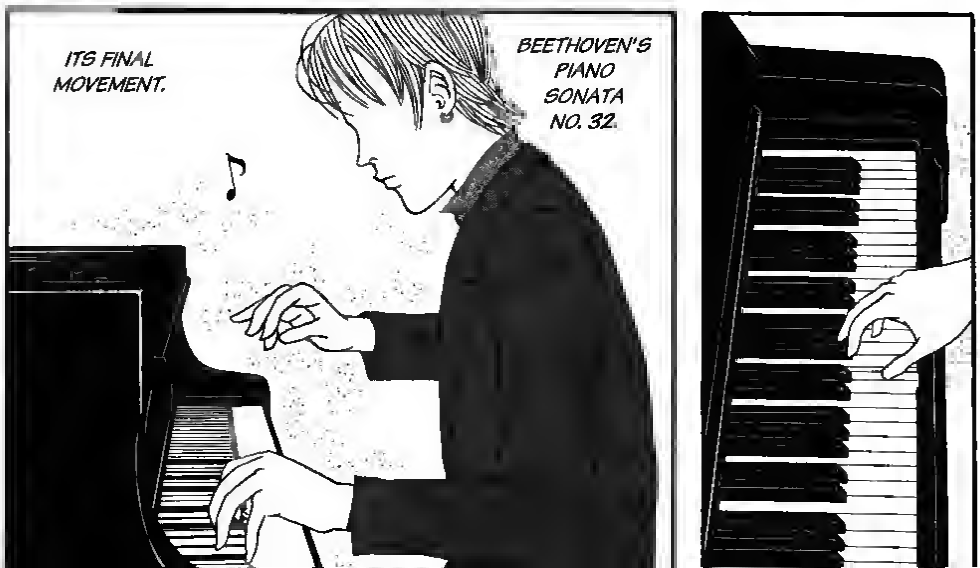

That's not what I wanna hear.
Tch.
We're still in our first year.
Don't look so down, Kozue.
Phew ...
I was rather unnerved.
GLARE
!
K-Kozue!
You're the last person I want to speak to right now!


RATHER THAN PLAYING FOR THE COMPETITION ..

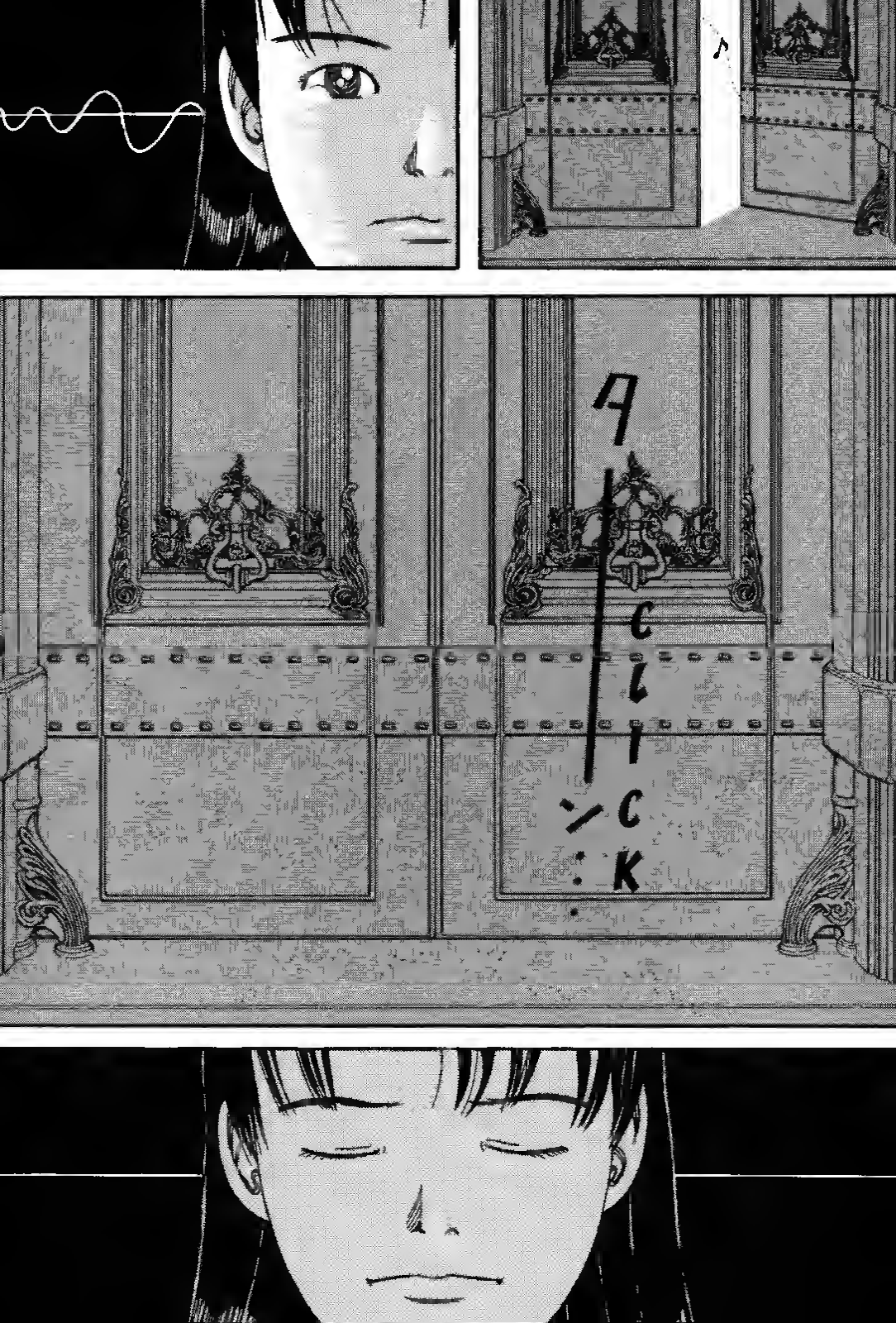
I ALWAYS GET STAGE FRIGHT. BUT I'M CALM NOW.

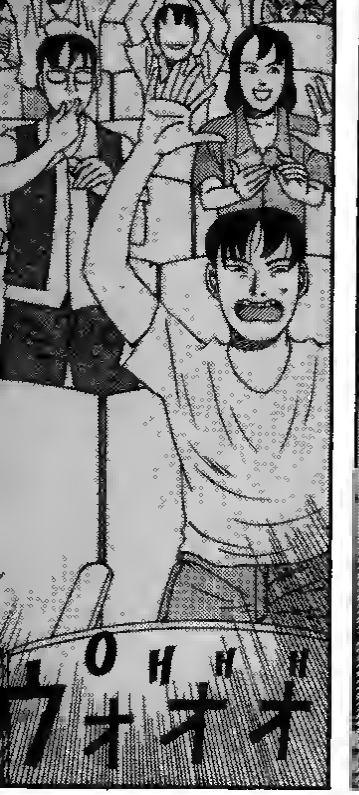
...IS FOR THE SOUND TO REACH ONE PERSON.
...ALL I WANT...

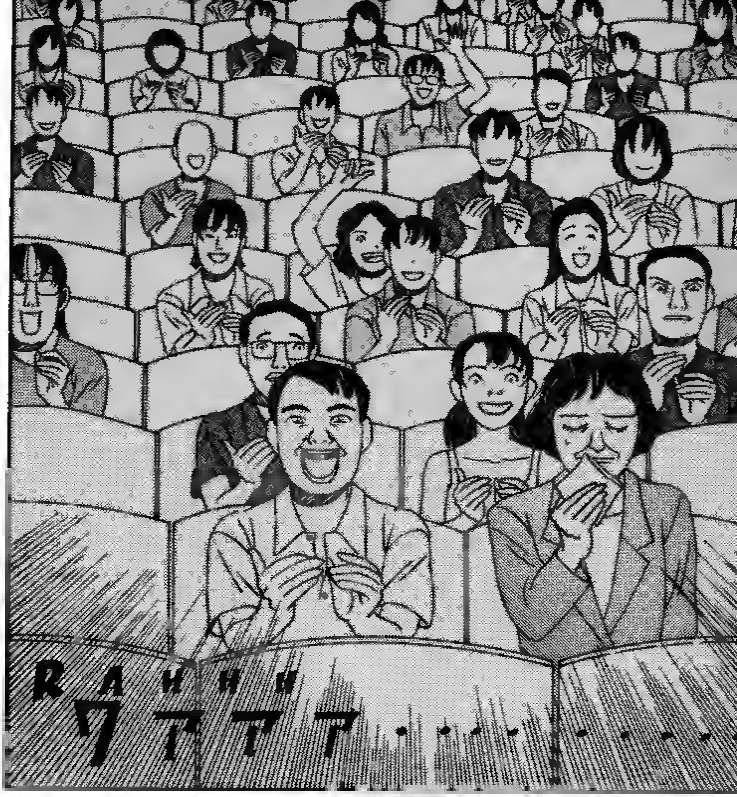


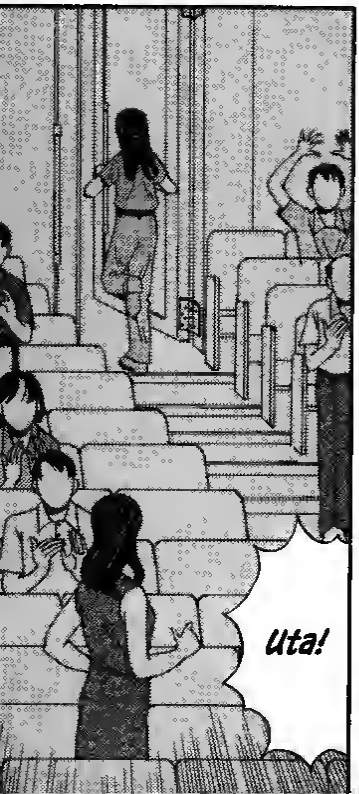

ITS FINAL MOVEMENT.
BEETHOVEN'S PIANO SONATA NO. 32.

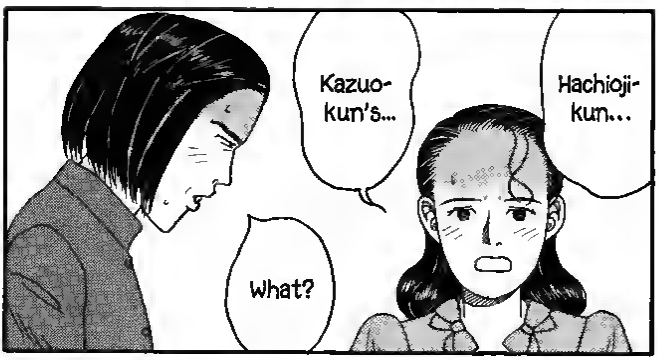
...WITHIN THE COMPOSER ALONE.
IT RESONATED...
BEETHOVEN HAD LOST HIS HEARING LONG BEFORE HE COMPOSED THIS PIECE.
SOUND—


♪
カチッ…

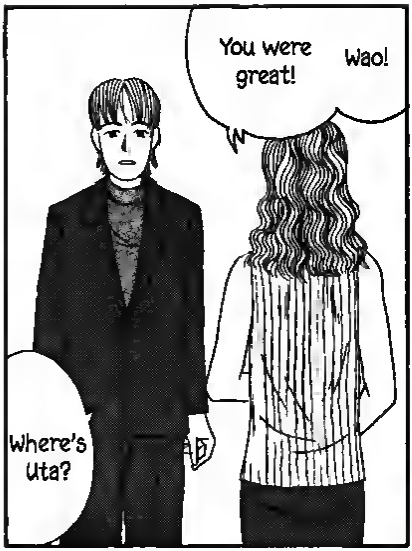

OHHH
ウオオオ


RAHHH
ワアアア……


Uta!


Kazuo-kun's...
Hachioji-kun...
What?

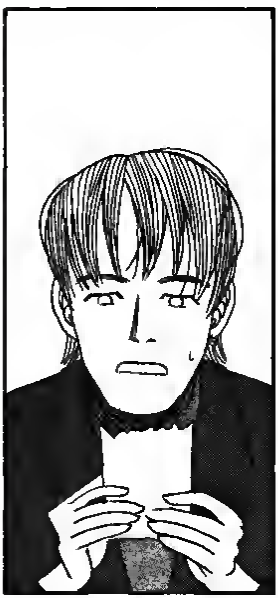
What?!
He's gone beyond us as a musician...


You were great!
Wao!
Where's Uta?

... the results.
We will now announce...

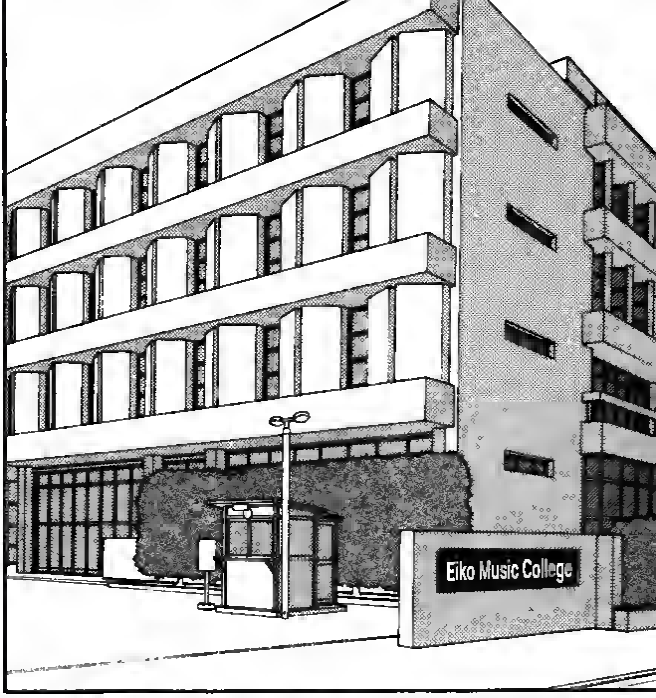
She wanted me to give this to you.

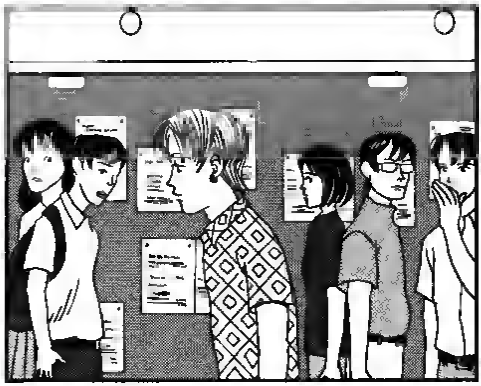
What?
She left.



Chapter 44 The Balloon Song

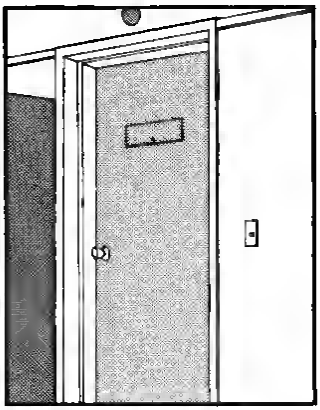
International Competition
Audition Winner
Mitsuru
Hachioji


Eiko Music College



Look, it's Kikuna.
psst psst

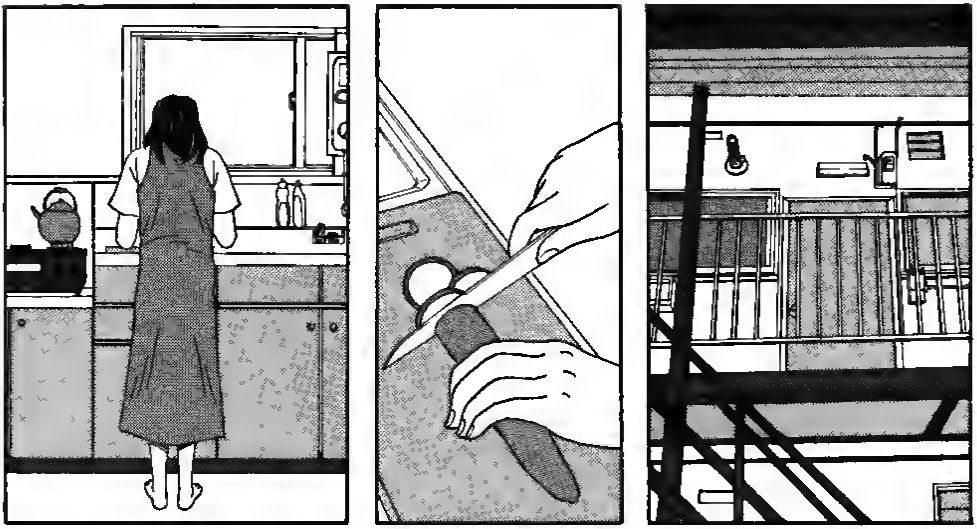
I objected to the decision at the faculty meeting, but...



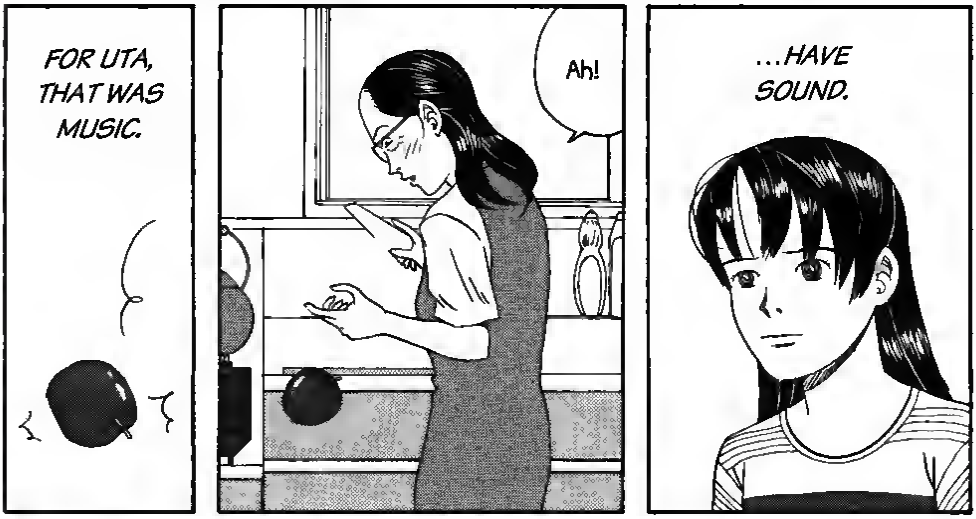
Actually...
...and for teaching Uta outside of my professional duties.
...being snapped at for "stealing" you...
I ended up...
It was awful.
...
That's amazing!
I've been asked...
...to teach at the Paris Conservatory.
...
Will you come with me?

So of course you told him...
I put off my answer.
Incredible!
Oh ...
But with Uta in that condition...
Of course I want to go...
Kanon...
Is your whole life for her?
Is she really *that* important?
Uta-chan, Uta-chan...

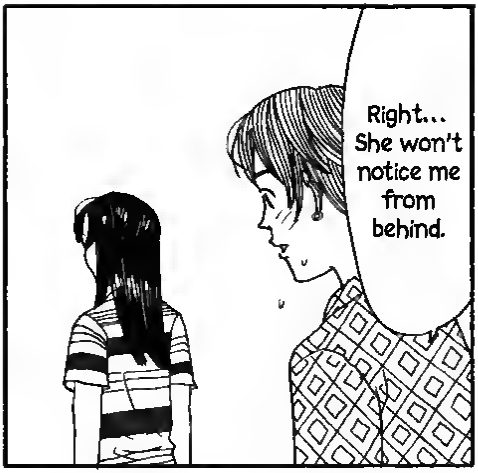
That's not true, Kanon.
But you don't need me.
I need your piano, too.
The two of you saved me.
Uta taught me about music.
You taught me about singing.
...get through this crisis.
That's why I have to help Uta...

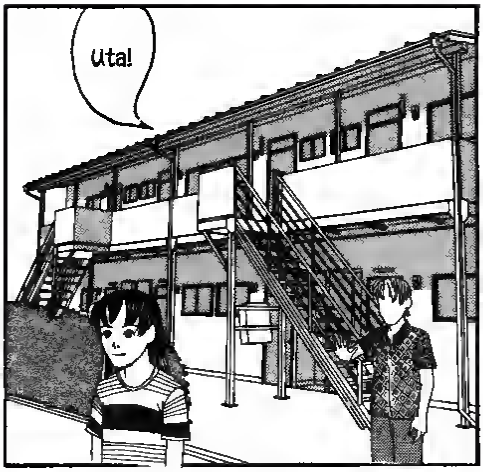


EVEN THE LITTLEST MOMENTS IN OUR DAILY LIVES...

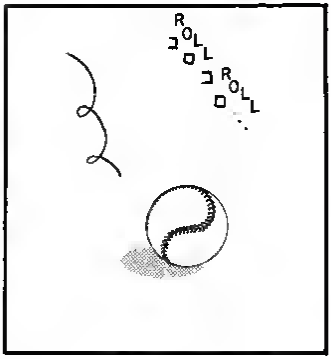


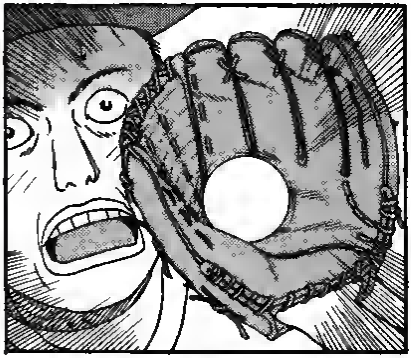
AND SHE'S LOST IT ALL...

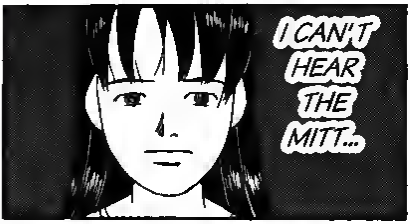

Right... She won't notice me from behind.

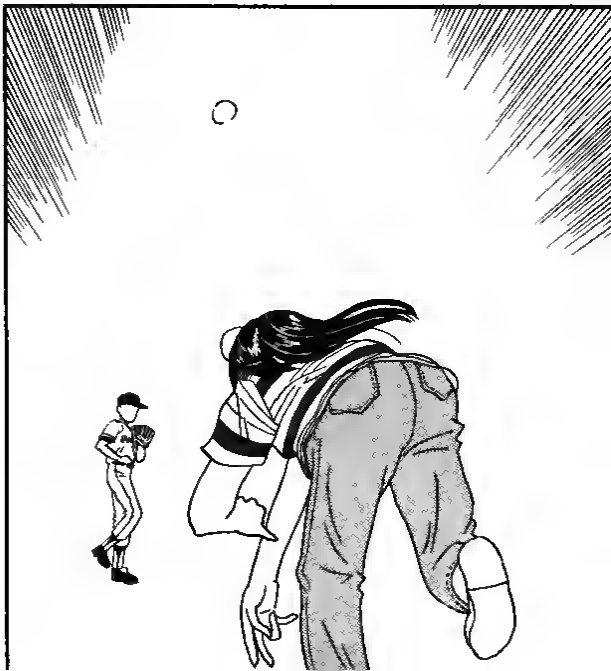

Uta!

SUMIKO

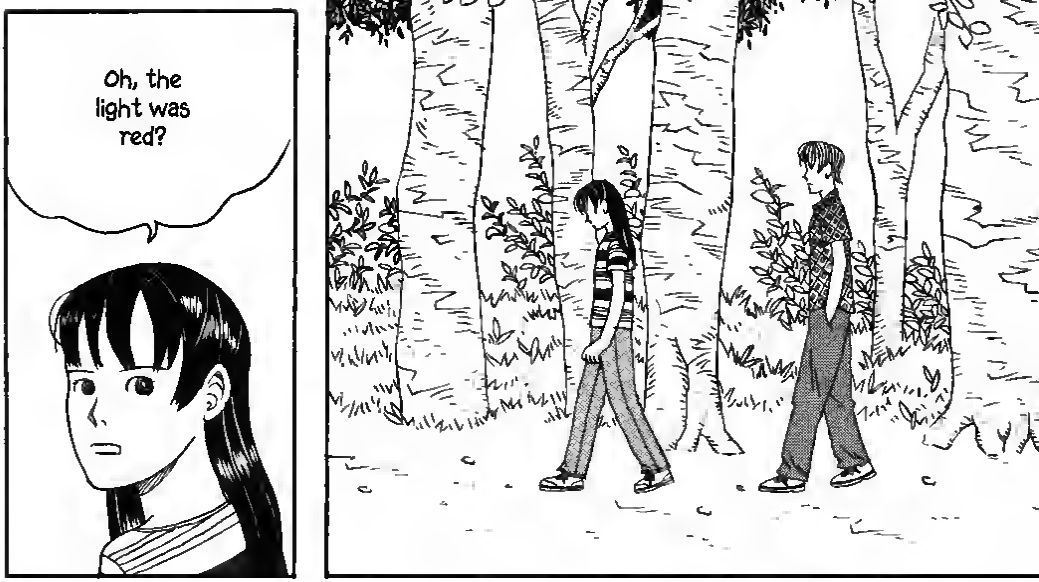

ROLL
ROLL
ROLL




I CAN'T HEAR THE MITT...

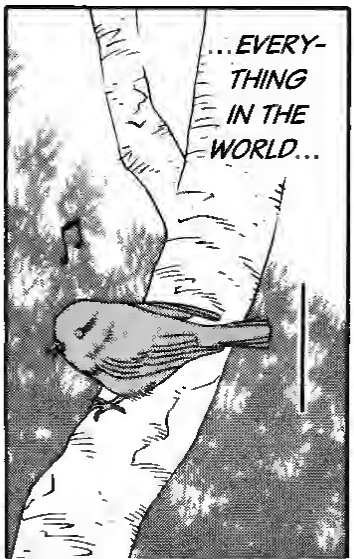


Uta, look out!
キイイイ・・・
SKREEE
...
Idiot!


Oh, the light was red?

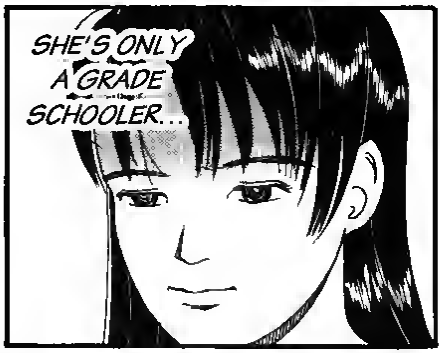
When I heard things, I would see colors.

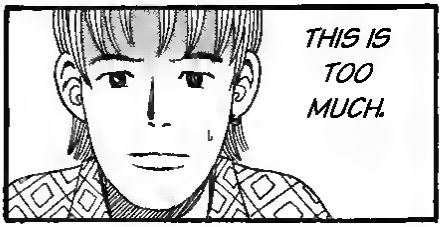
My ears and eyes are connected.
You have to ask?

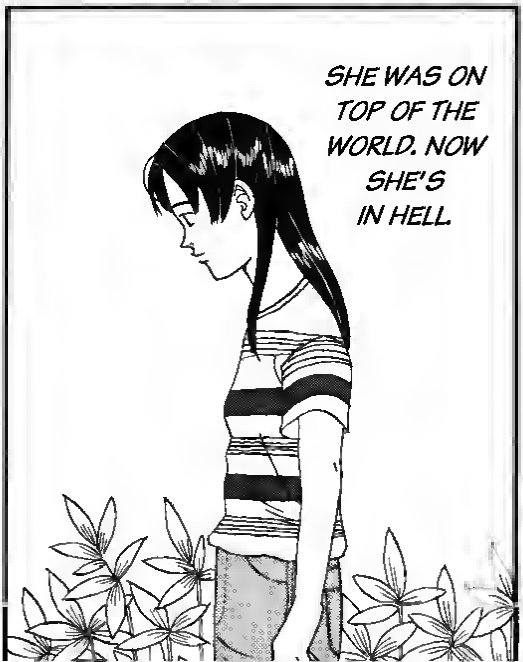

...EVERY-THING IN THE WORLD...

THE MOMENT I STOPPED HEARING...

...LOST ITS COLOR.


SHE'S ONLY A GRADE SCHOOLER...

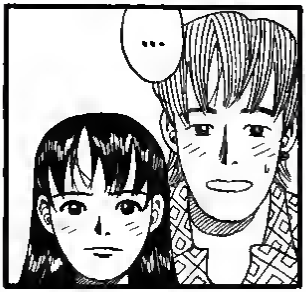

THIS IS TOO MUCH.


SHE WAS ON TOP OF THE WORLD. NOW SHE'S IN HELL.

?
You're Uta?
Kanon...
Your dad told me...
I'm a dancer.
My name is Kazaoka.
...you went this way.
I was born deaf.
SWISH サラサラ SWISH...

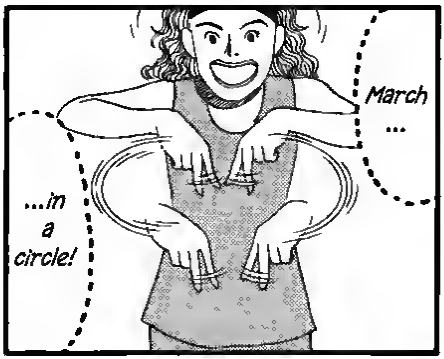
Deaf children...?
I taught deaf children how to speak at one of Kazaoka-san's workshops.
But I love watching you play the piano.
...
Will you play the piano at my workshop?
And when I thought to contact her, she said she wanted to meet Uta-chan...
COMMUNITY CENTER

But they all love making music.


...

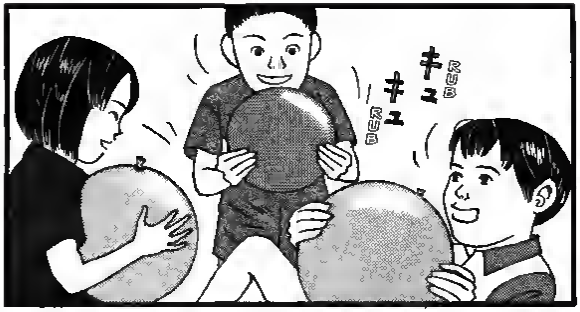
Most of the kids here were born deaf.
ワーッ
WAHH
シャンシャン
SHAHN SHAHN
ピーン
TWEEP
チーン
DING
チン
DING
ガシャ
CLANG
ガシャ
CLANG
ハハハー
HA HA HA

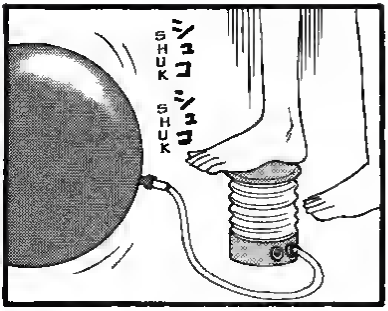
ドーン
TUMP
ドーン
TUMP
ドーン
TUMP


March ...
...in a circle!

ドーン
TUMP

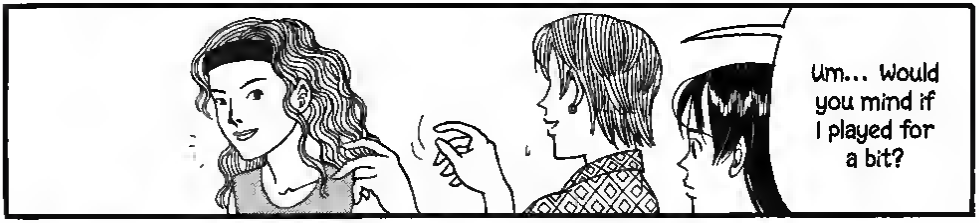
...
ドクン
DUMP
ドクン
DUMP
ドクン
DUMP
Waahh!
だっ
TAP
Wahh!
だだだ
TAP TAP TAP
だだ
TAP TAP
...from inside.
Vibrations...
...helps them recognize their voice as vibrations from inside.
This exercise...
Use your voice.
Your voice.
Wah!

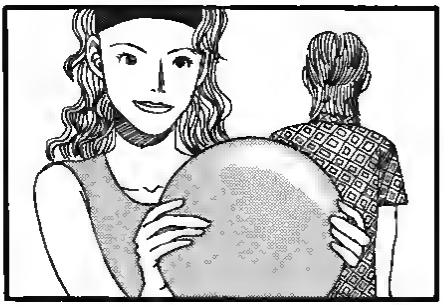

キュ
KUU
キュ
KUU

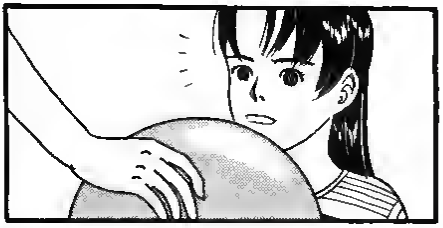

シュコ シュコ
SHUK SHUK

I'm not gonna play.

Please play the piano.
Uta.

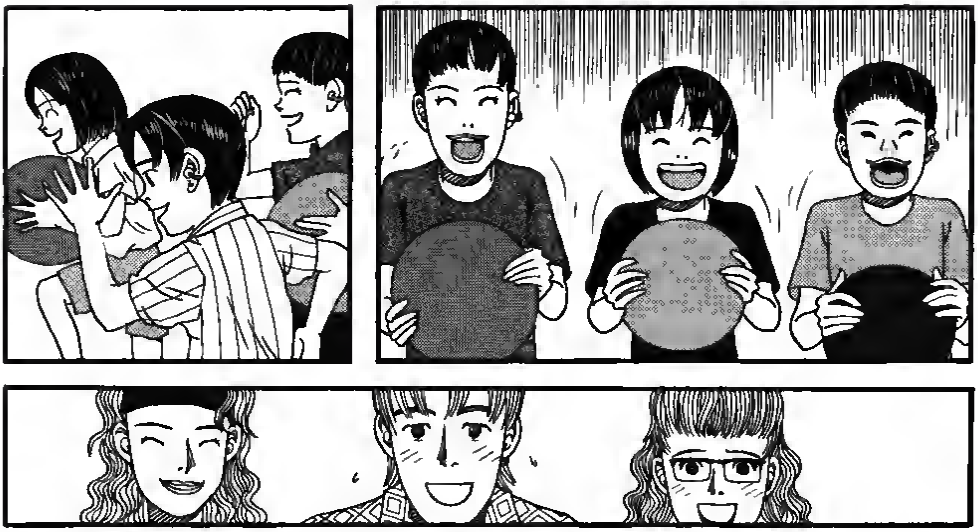

Um... Would you mind if I played for a bit?



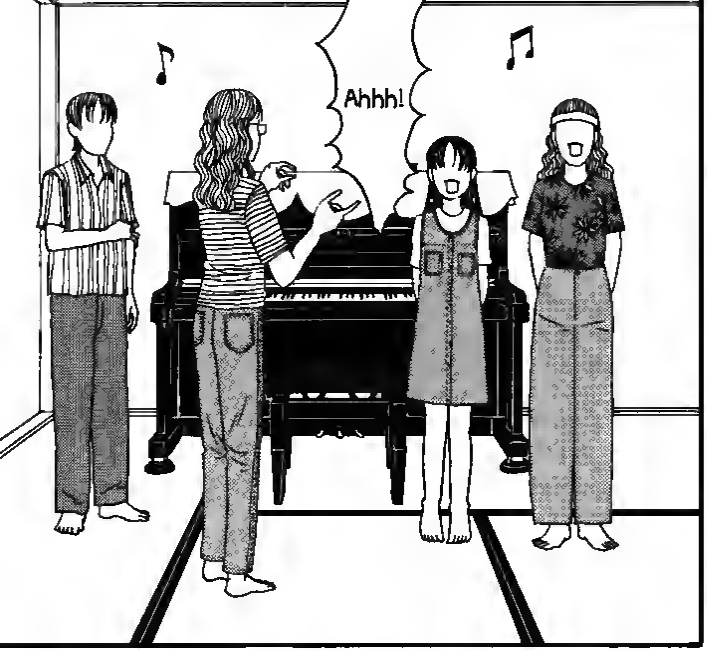


I CAN FEEL IT...
BUNN
ビリ
BUNN
ビリ
I CAN FEEL...
...WAO'S SOUND!

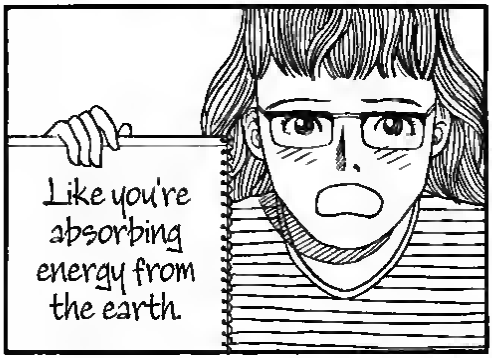
uta...

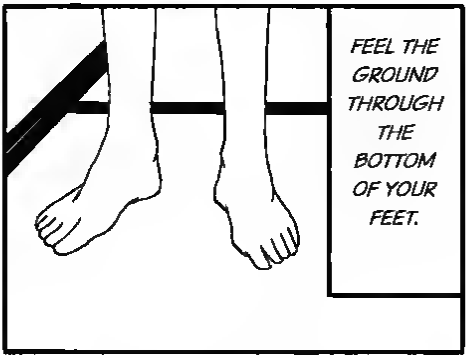


Chapter 45 The Sta-chan Song


Ahhh!

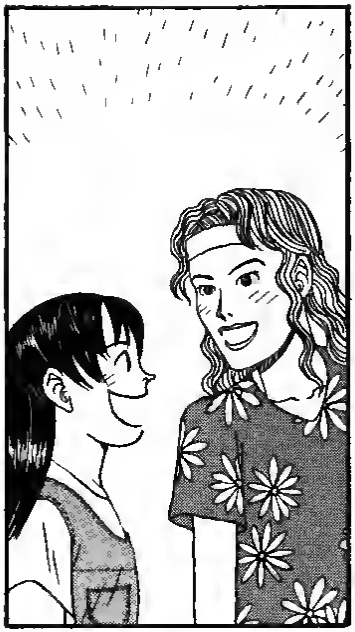
KIKUNA GROCERY


Like you're absorbing energy from the earth.


FEEL THE GROUND THROUGH THE BOTTOM OF YOUR FEET.

BREATHE IN TO YOUR BACK!

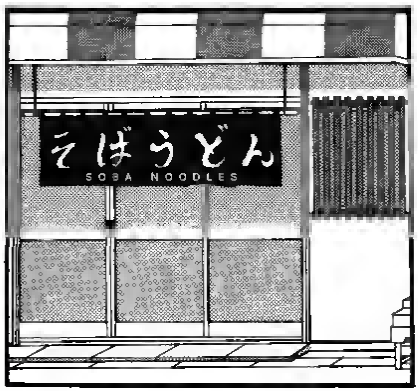
Right here.
You can feel the vibrating there. Right?

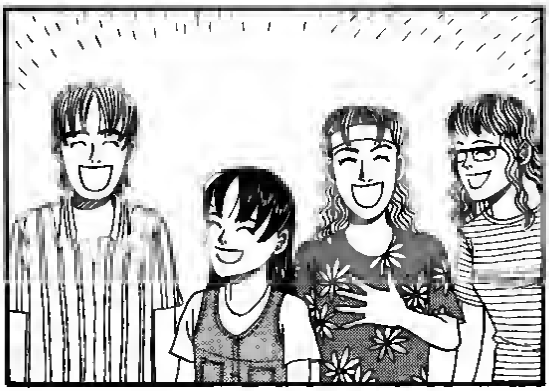


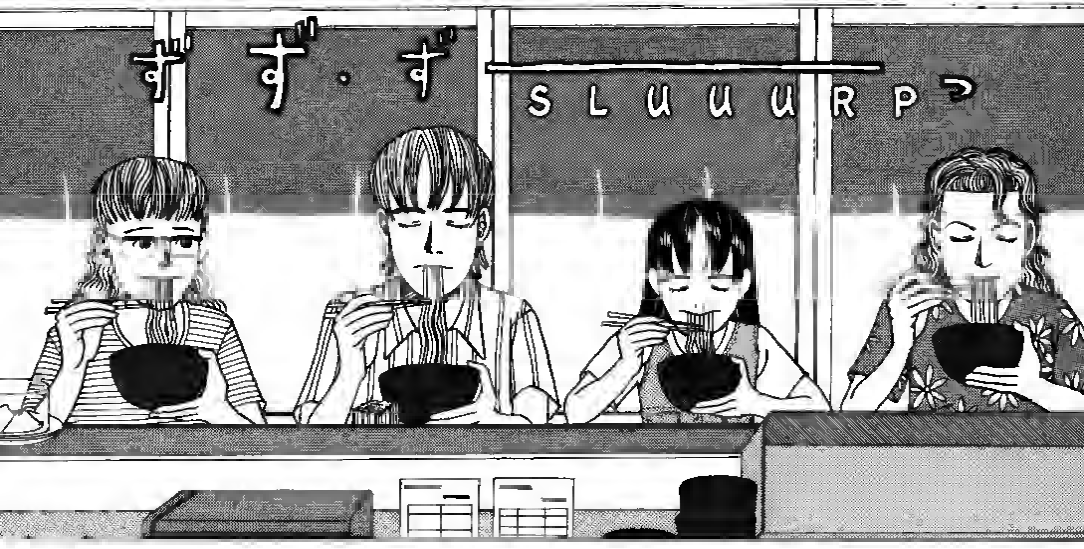
Ahhhh!

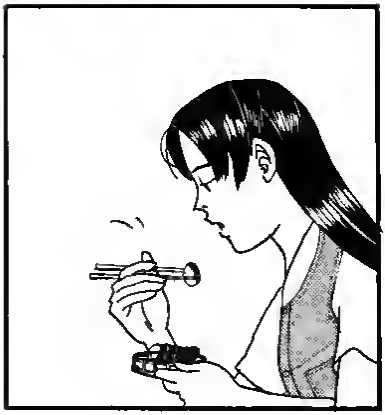
I felt it through my *nostrils.*

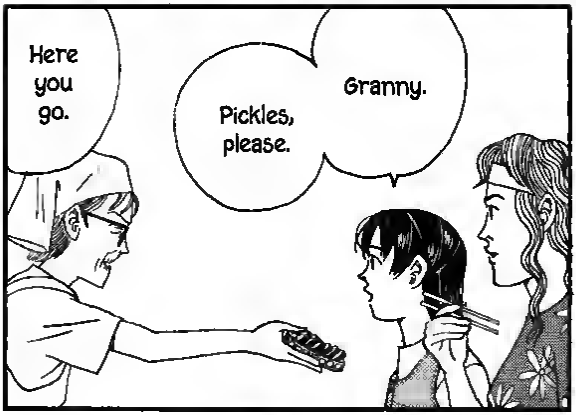
You were in harmony!
Could you tell?


そばうどん
SOBA NOODLES

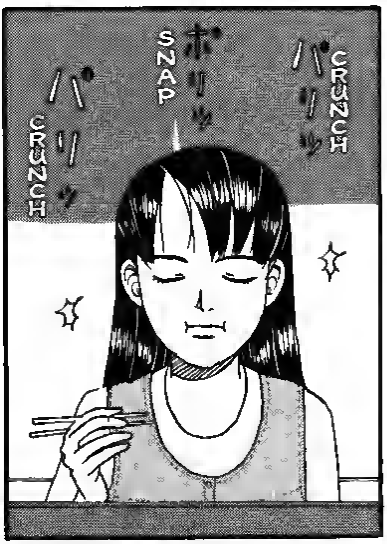



ず ず・ず
SLUUUURP




Here you go.
Granny.
Pickles, please.

That's a nice sound...
Ooh, Uta-chan.

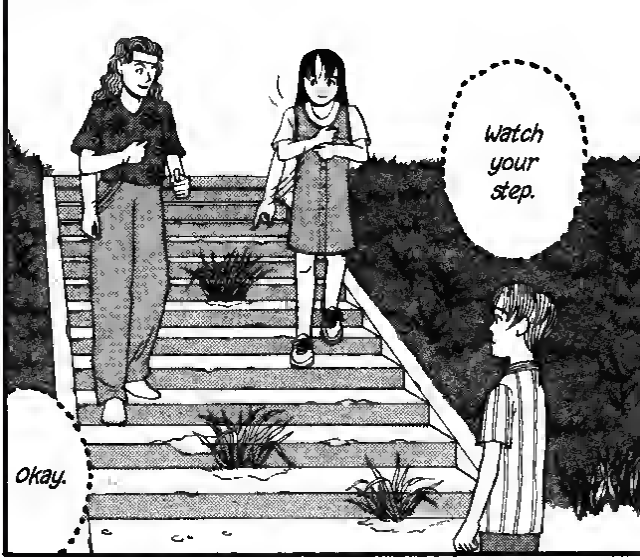

SNAP
CRUNCH
CRUNCH

She can't hear.
Wait...

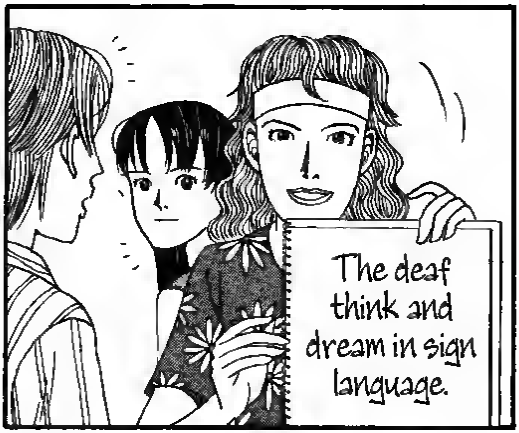
...
But now, I can feel good vibrations in my body when I eat.
At first, everything tasted bad 'cause I couldn't hear it.
You should play piano in concert again.
...
I agree. Your piano is just as good as before.
SWISH
SWISH

My fingers don't feel connected to the piano anymore.
Before, I could say anything I wanted with a piano.
ズ‥ズ SLUURP ッ
…

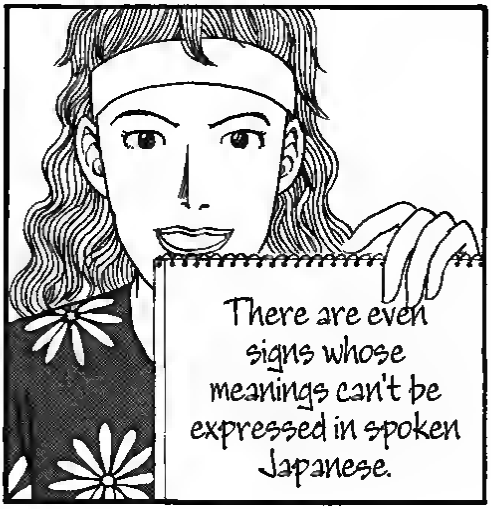
You're learning sign language?
Yeah.

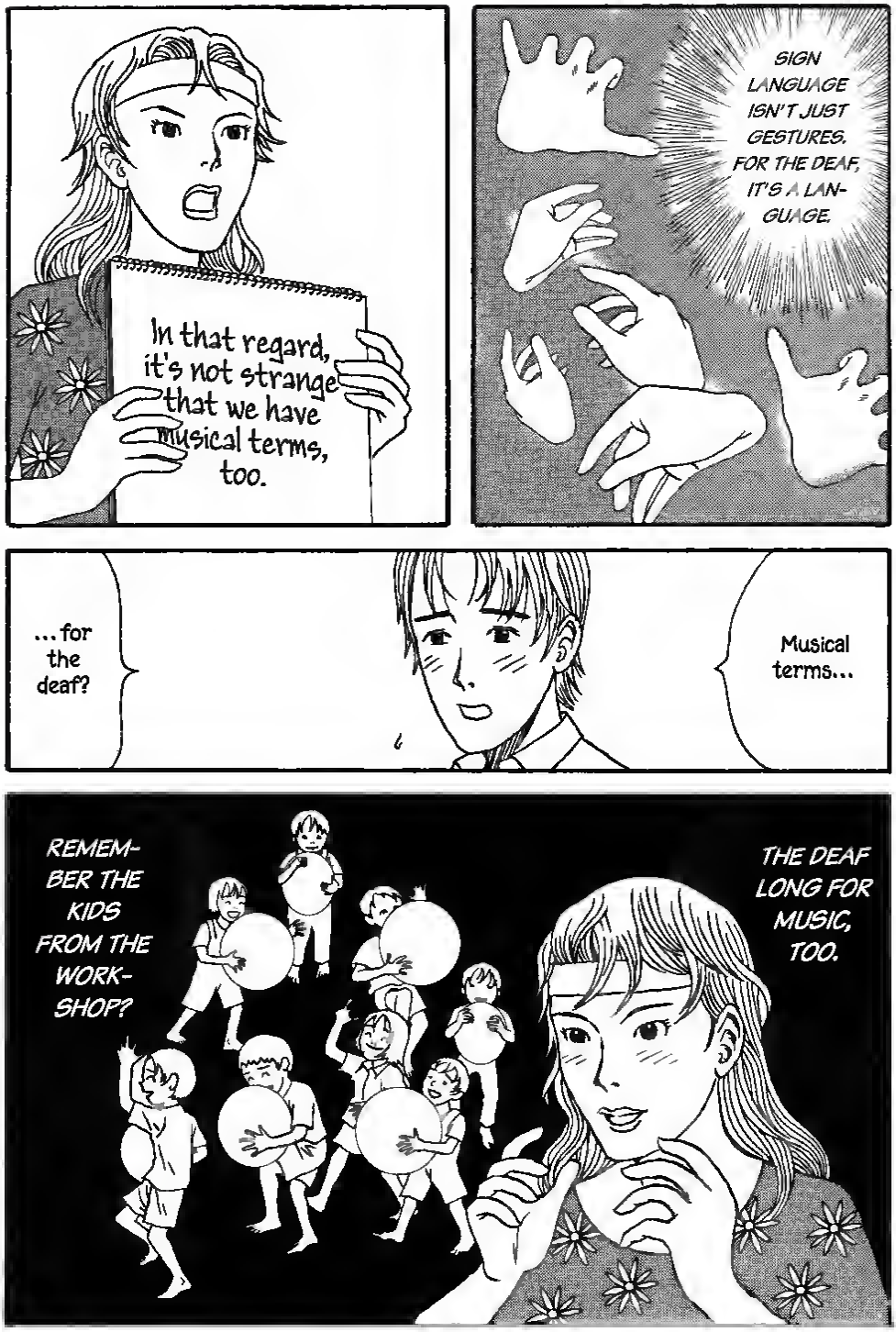

Watch your step.
Okay.

Dreams in sign language?
What kinds of dreams are those?

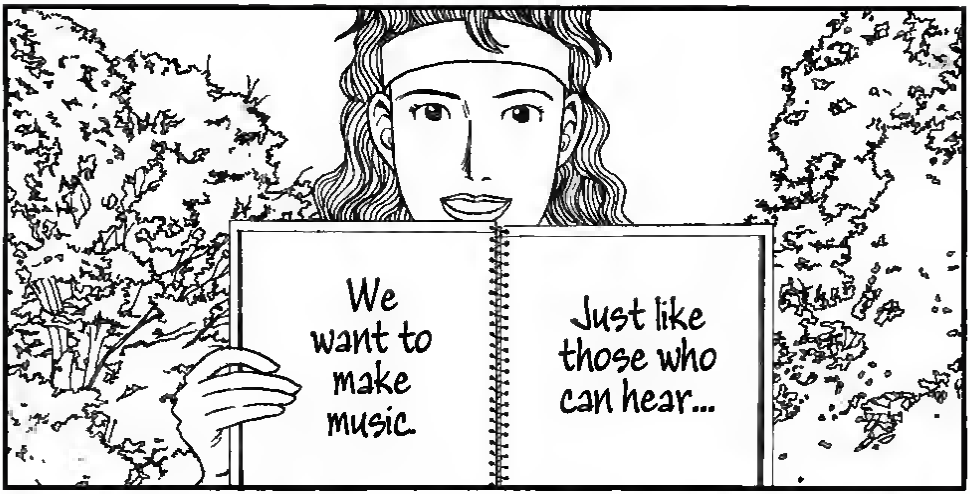

The deaf think and dream in sign language.

Hmm. I always thought of sign language as using gestures to communicate.

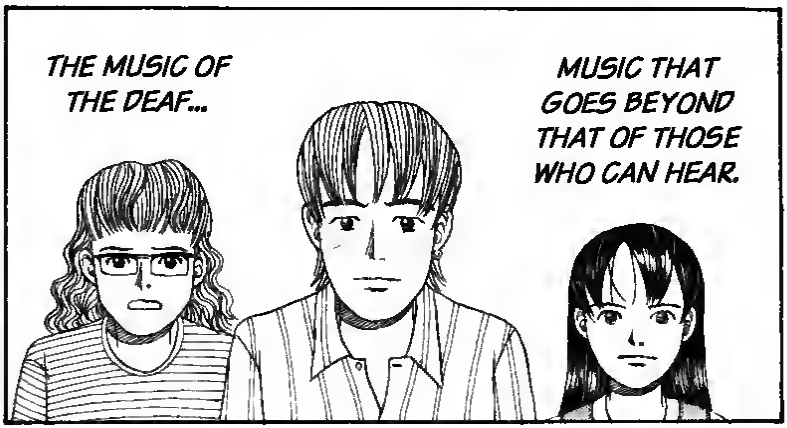

There are even signs whose meanings can't be expressed in spoken Japanese.


In that regard, it's not strange that we have musical terms, too.
SIGN LANGUAGE ISN'T JUST GESTURES. FOR THE DEAF, IT'S A LANGUAGE.
... for the deaf?
Musical terms...
REMEMBER THE KIDS FROM THE WORKSHOP?
THE DEAF LONG FOR MUSIC, TOO.

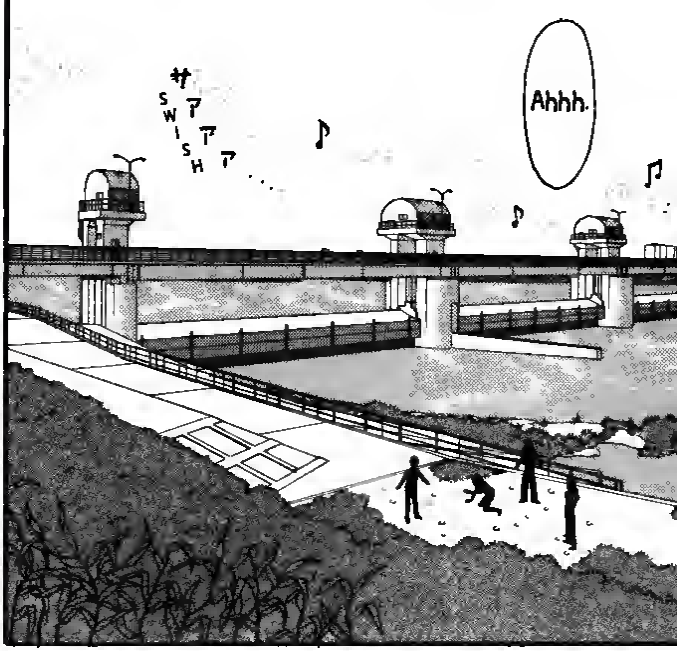
I WAS BORN INTO A SILENT WORLD.
DANCE IS HOW I EXPRESS MYSELF.



...BEGINS WITH BECOMING ATTUNED TO VIBRATIONS.

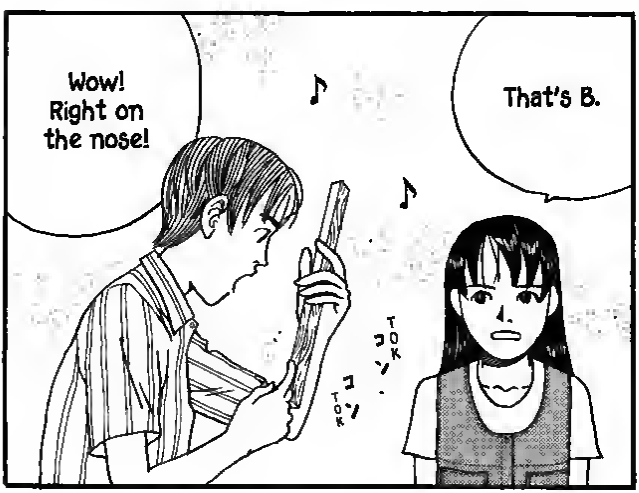


Ahhh.
Ahhh.

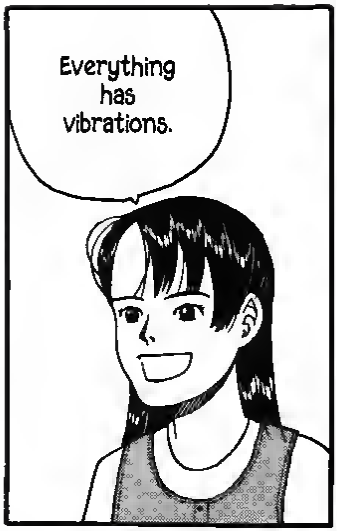

SWISH
Ahhh.

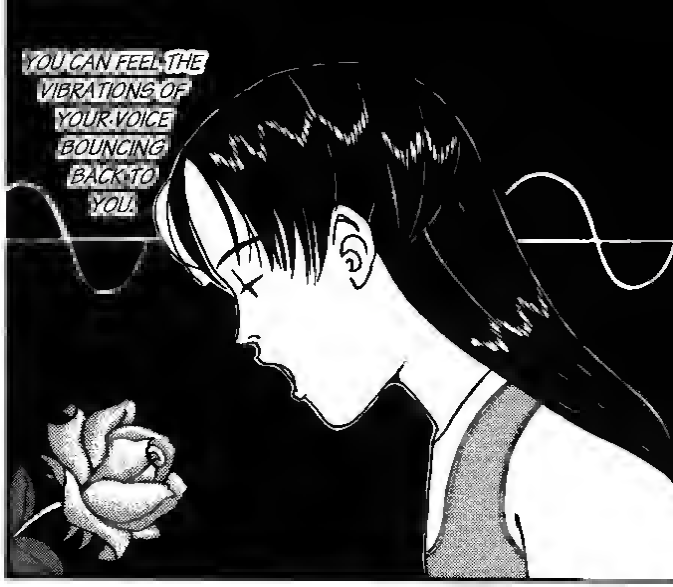
TOK
TOK
You're right.

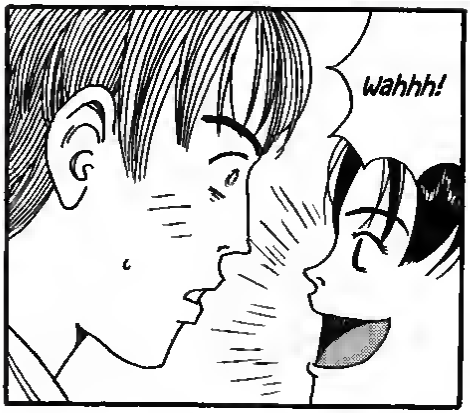
This rock is a D sharp.


Wow! Right on the nose!
That's B.
TOK
TOK

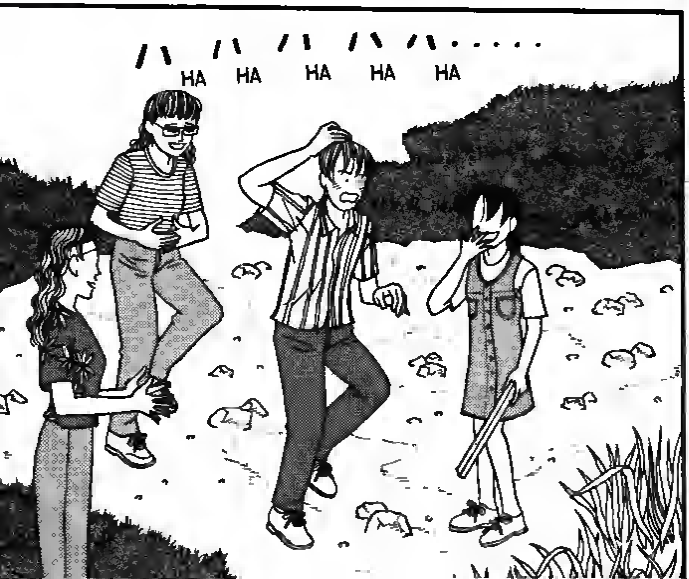
Ahhhh.


Everything has vibrations.

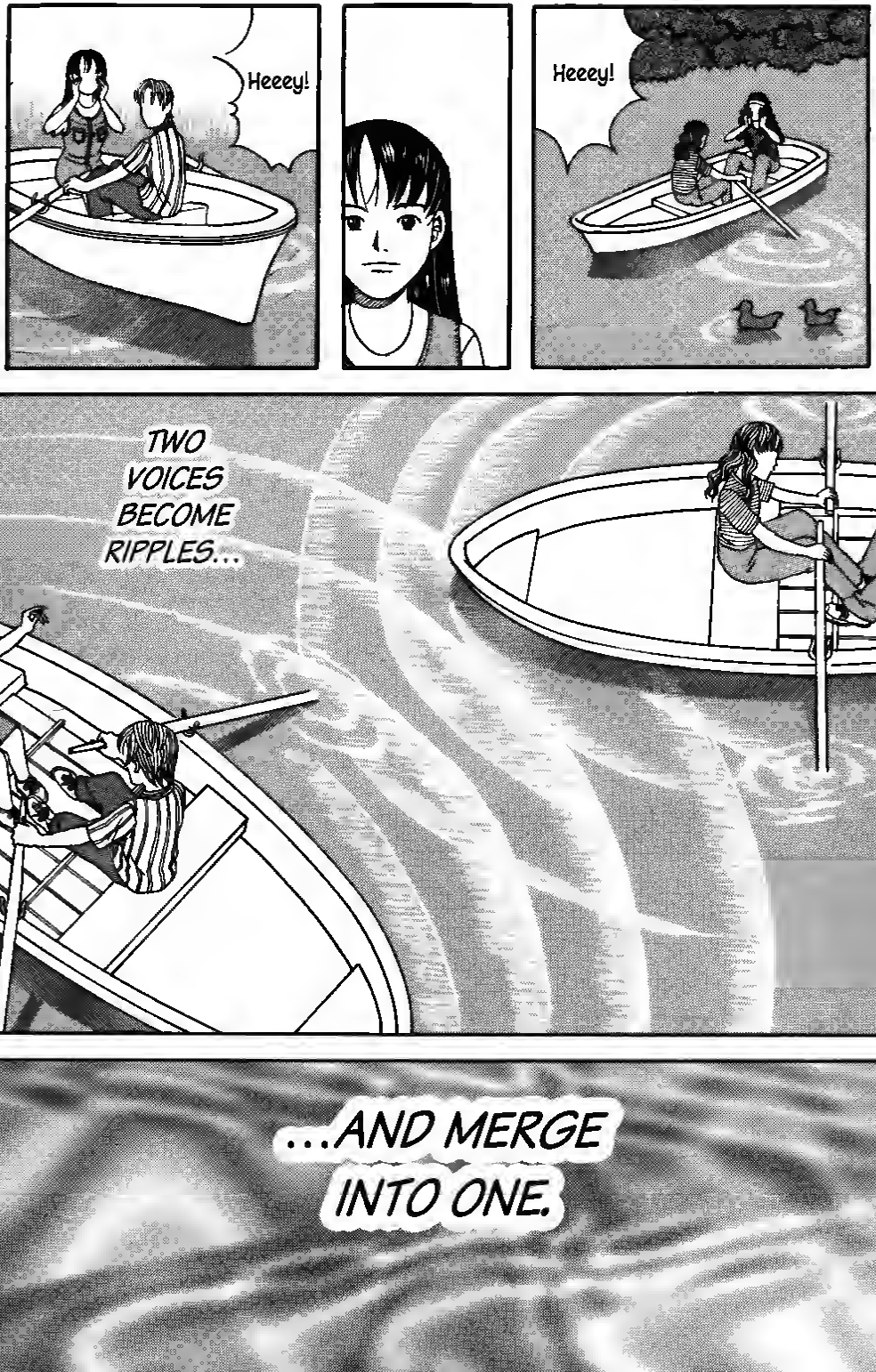

YOU CAN FEEL THE VIBRATIONS OF YOUR VOICE BOUNCING BACK TO YOU.

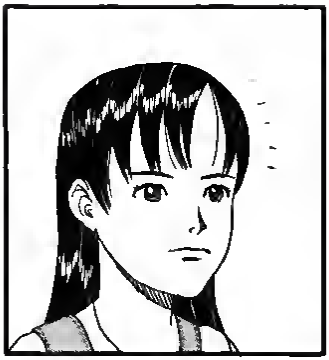

Wahhh!

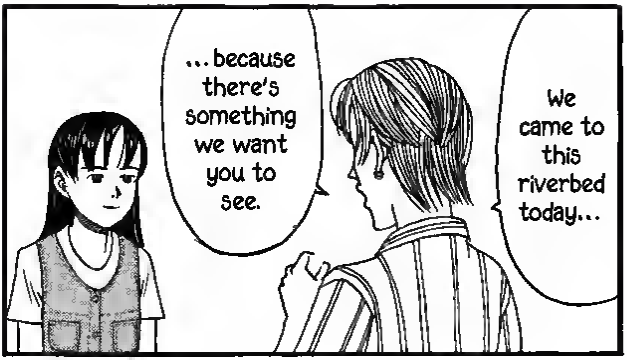
Huh?
Even you.

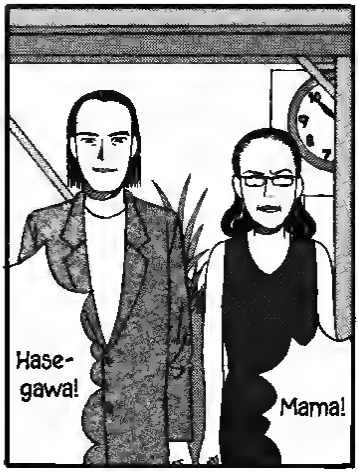

HA HA HA HA HA

B flat.
TOK

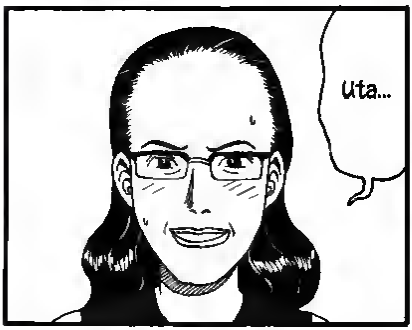

Heeey!
Heeey!
TWO VOICES BECOME RIPPLES...
...AND MERGE INTO ONE.

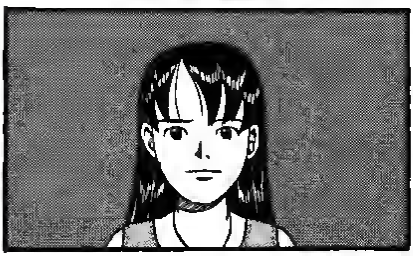


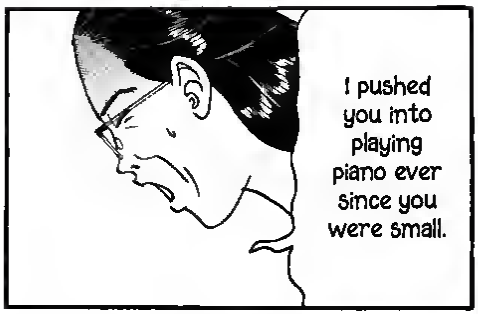

We came to this riverbed today...
...because there's something we want you to see.

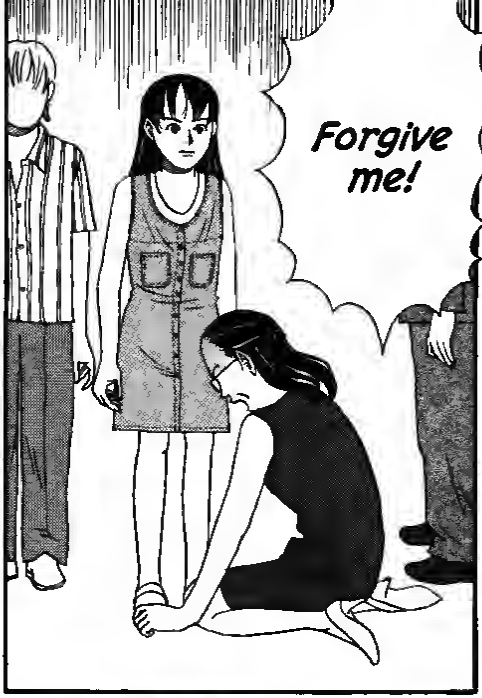

Hase-gawa!
Mama!

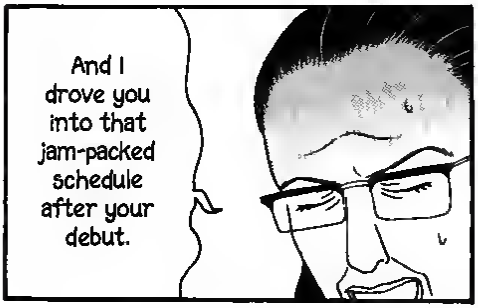
?

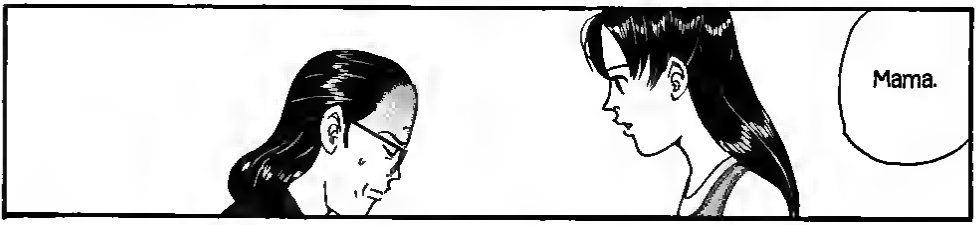

Uta...

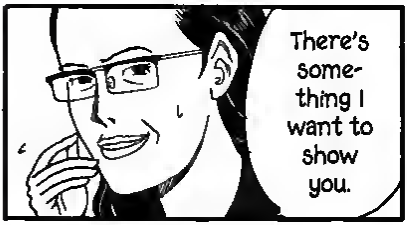



I pushed you into playing piano ever since you were small.


Forgive me!

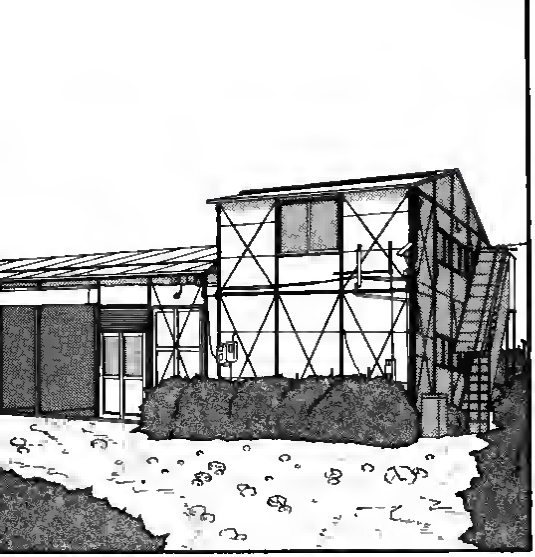

And I drove you into that jam-packed schedule after your debut.

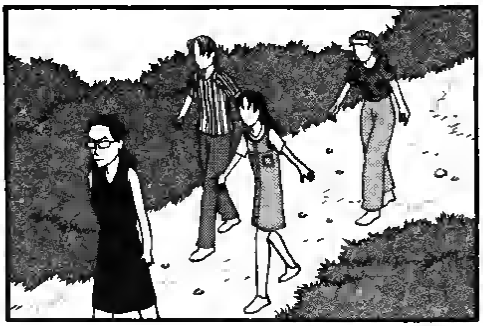

Mama.

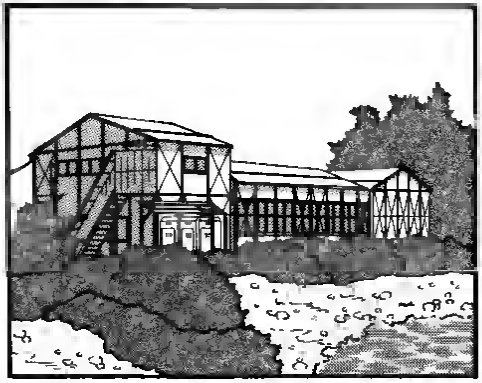

There's something I want to show you.

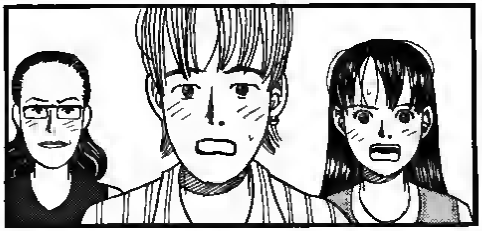
It's the only way I can make it up to you.

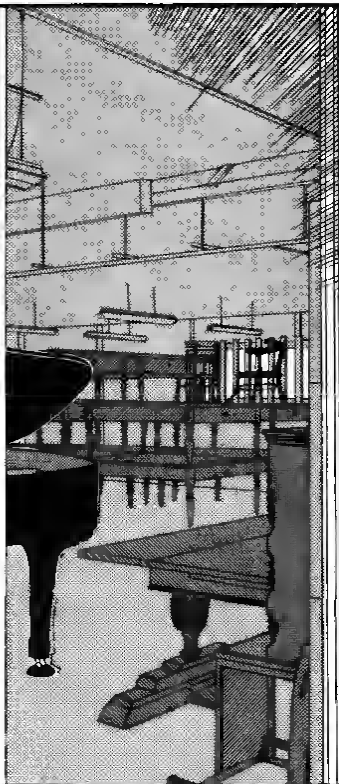
...without you saying anything.
I know how you feel...
Uta...

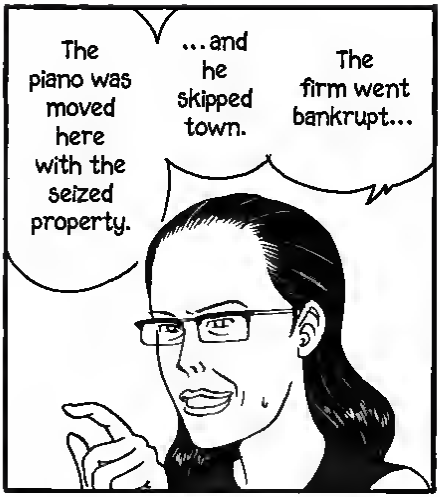


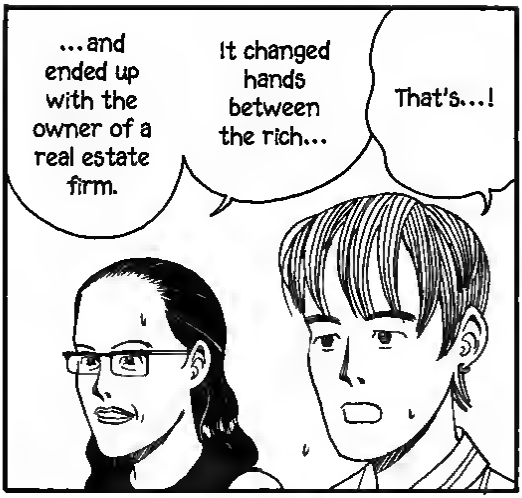


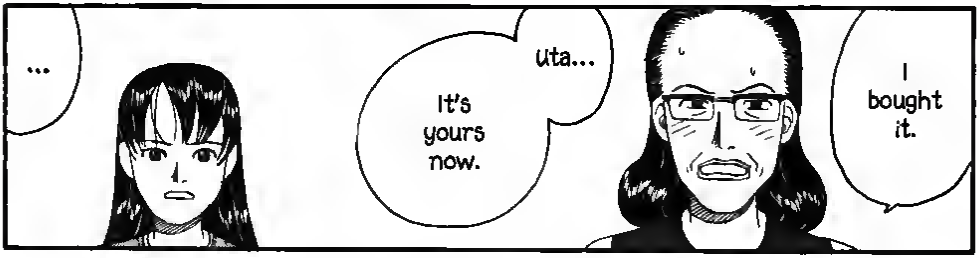







The piano was moved here with the seized property.
...and he skipped town.
The firm went bankrupt...


...and ended up with the owner of a real estate firm.
It changed hands between the rich...
That's...!


...
It's yours now.
Uta...
I bought it.

You suffered so much.
Sta-chan...

...
The poor thing.

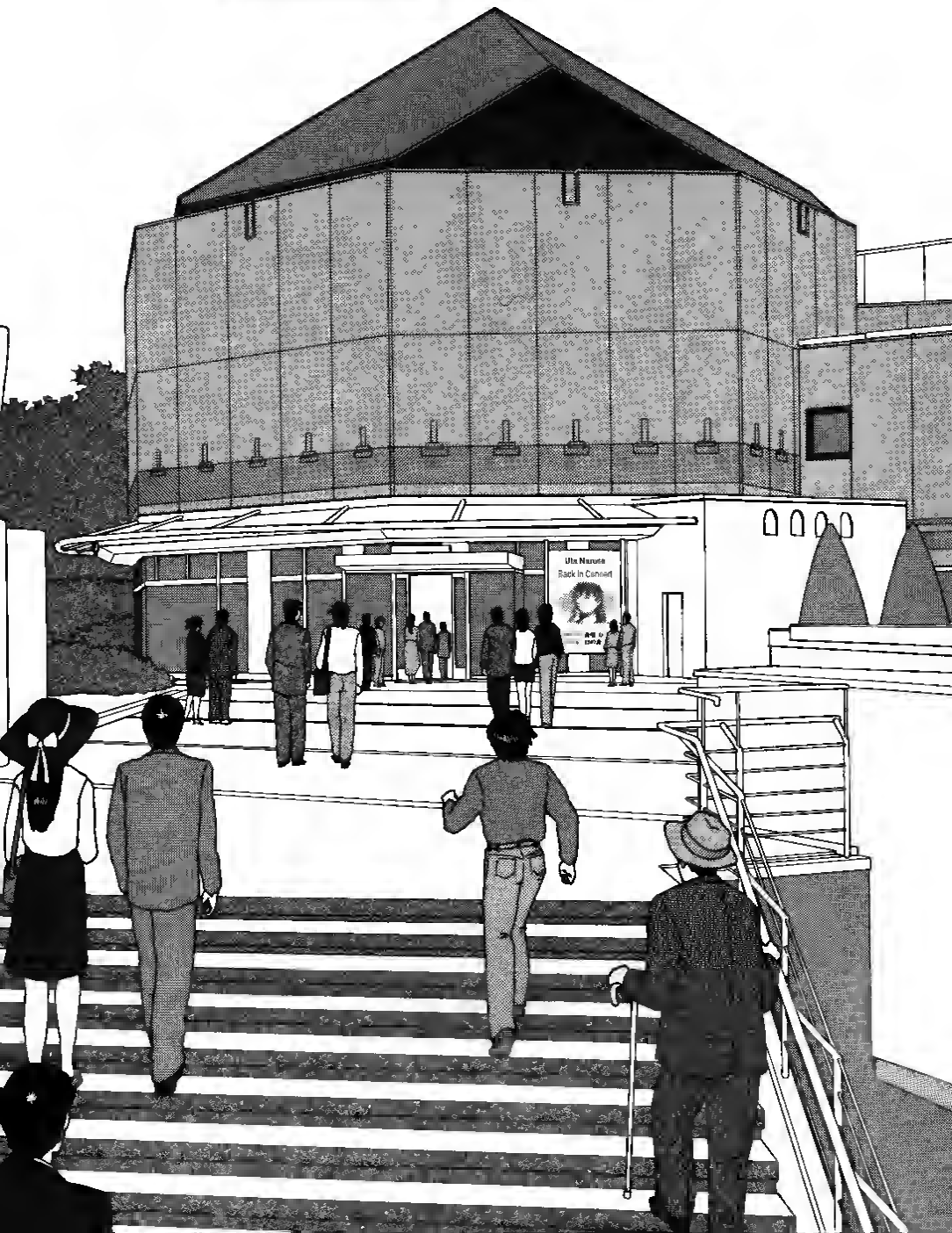
I can tell from touch-ing it.

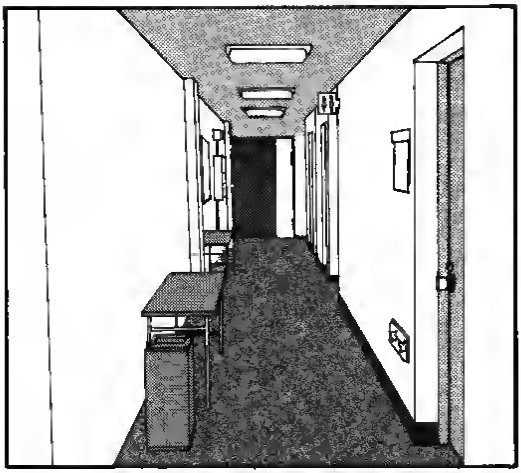
It's condition isn't as bad as it looks...
I think I can be of some use to you.
I came right away when Kazuo contacted me.
What?
But I want to try tuning Sta-chan myself.
Thank you, Hasegawa...
...is a part of her own body.
For Uta, this piano...
But...
Please help her do it, Mr. Hasegawa.

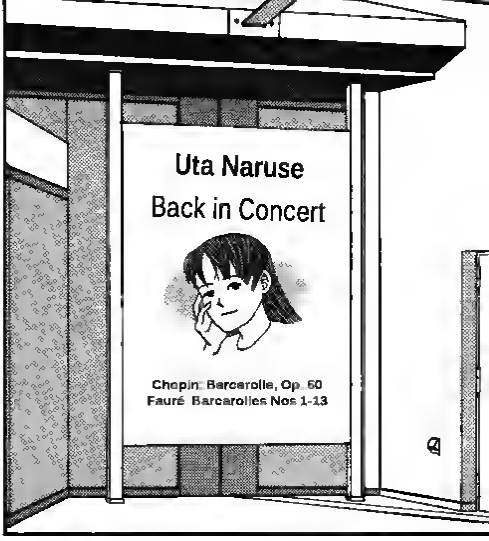
AHHH
PLLING
How's this?
A little tighter.
Loosen this one.
PINNN

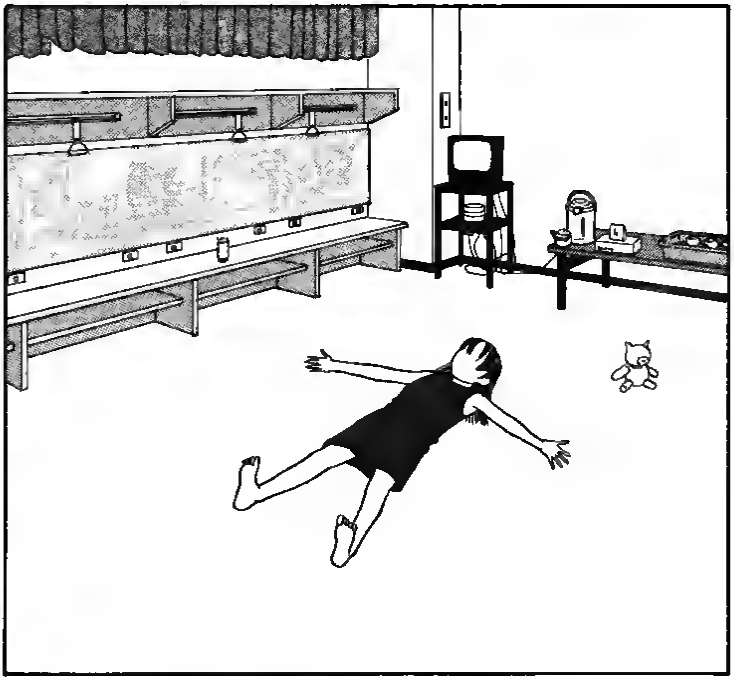
Chapter 45: The Sta-chan Song • End.

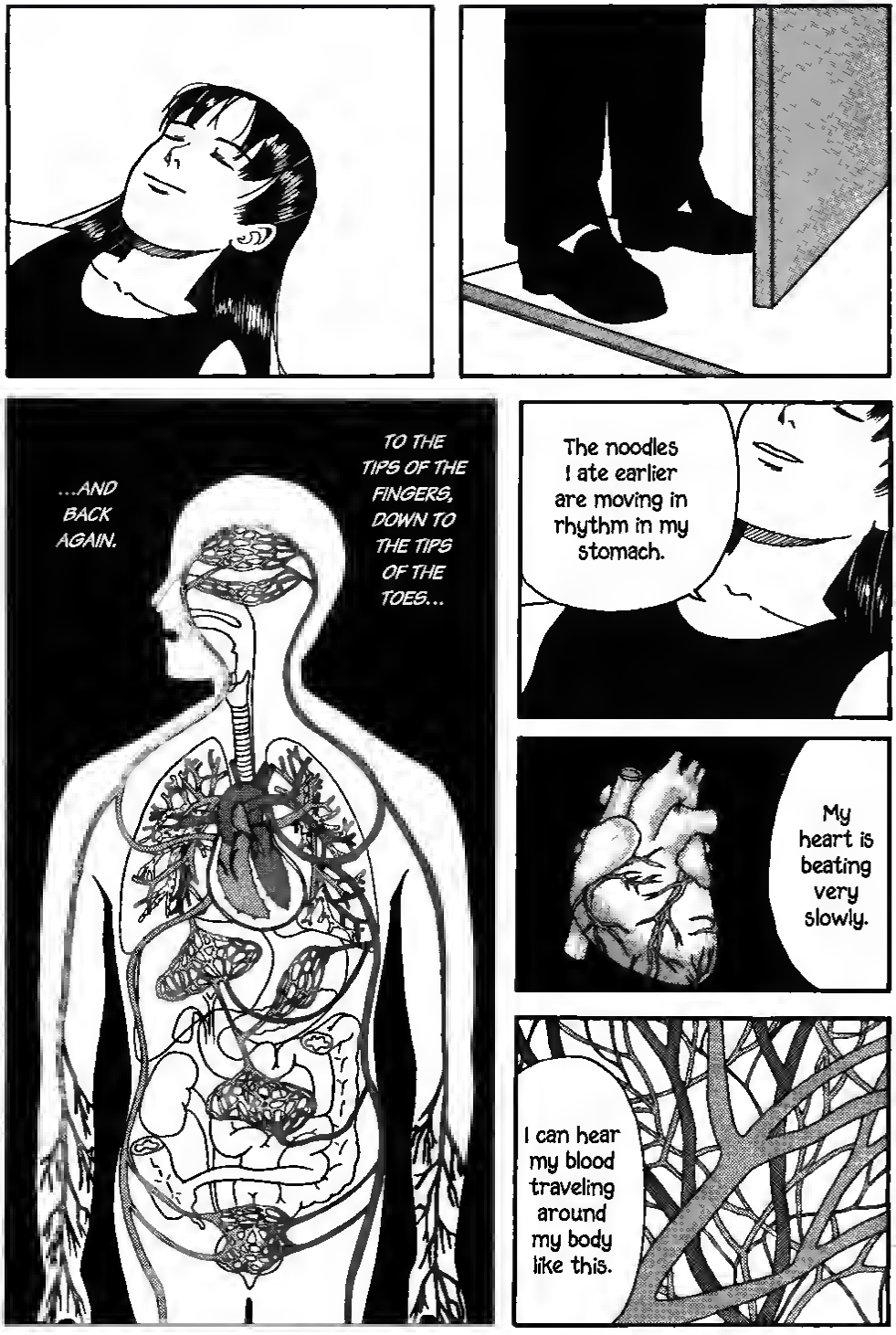
Chapter 46 The Uta Song





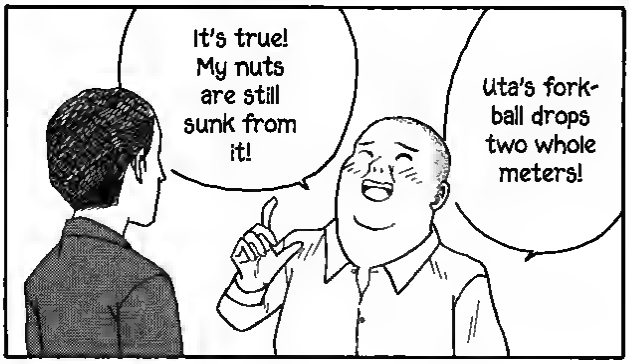

Uta Naruse
Back in Concert
Chopin: Barcarolle, Op. 60
Fauré Barcarolles Nos 1-13

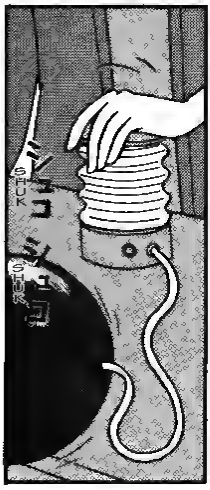



...AND BACK AGAIN.
TO THE TIPS OF THE FINGERS, DOWN TO THE TIPS OF THE TOES...
The noodles I ate earlier are moving in rhythm in my stomach.
My heart is beating very slowly.
I can hear my blood traveling around my body like this.

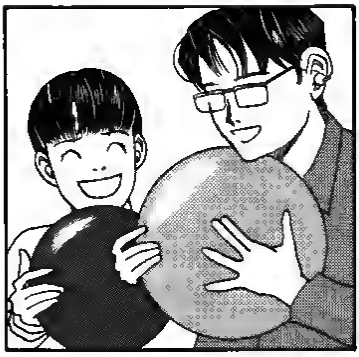
When you taught me...
... to listen to the sound of the heart.
... that baseball game?
Hey, Wao, do you remember...
...
It's only now that I really get it.

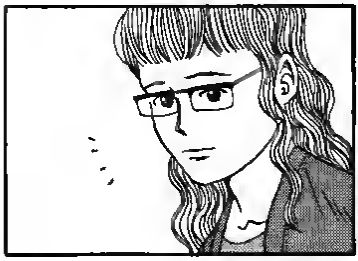
I've been waiting for this day!
Uta-chan was so strong!


It's true! My nuts are still sunk from it!
Uta's fork-ball drops two whole meters!

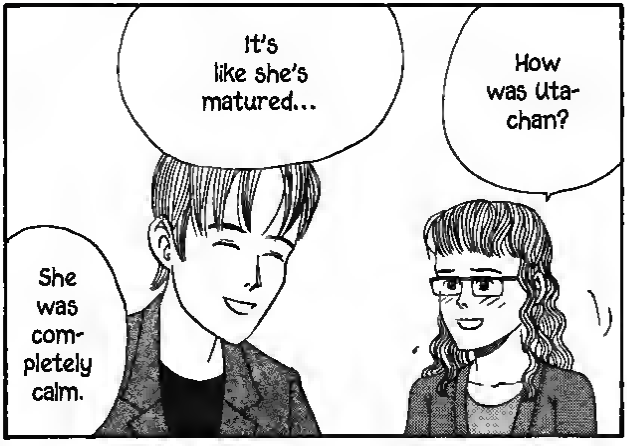

SUCK
SUCK

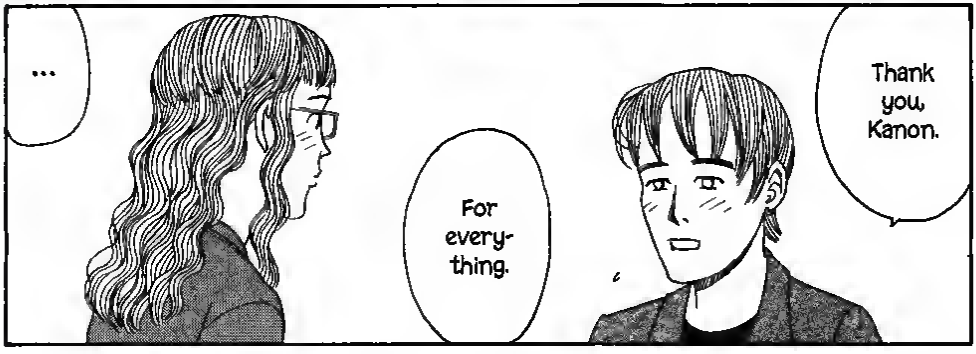
FIDGET
FIDGET





...that I can do for her.
There's nothing left...


It's like she's matured...
How was Uta-chan?
She was completely calm.


...
For everything.
Thank you, Kanon.

Oh...
In the spring...
I'm going to Paris.
If I ever make it as a pianist...
... then...
I want to be one of the best...
... piano accom-panists.
Okay.
... have me as your accompanist.

パチパチパチパチパチパチパチパチパチパチ
CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP
パチパチパチパチパチパチパチパチパチパチパチパチ
CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP
MURMUR

Ohh... She's bare foot...
It was custom made from an oak tree.
I gave it to Uta.
That seat...
PLOP
ひょい
TO PRODUCE A MORE BEAUTIFUL SOUND HERSELF.
UTA CAN USE THE SOUNDS SHE FEELS THROUGH THE SEAT.

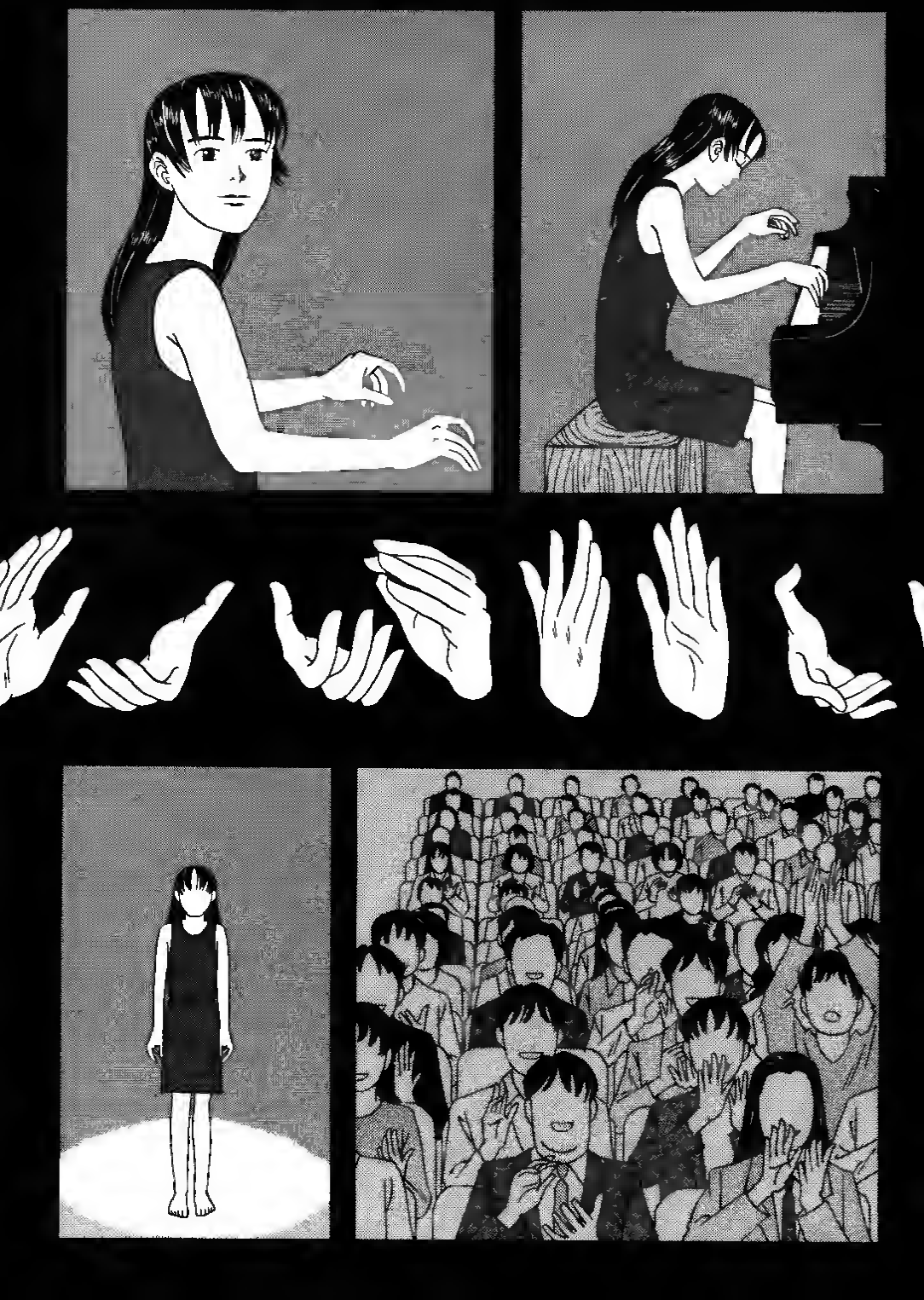
You can do it!
Uta...
I CAN FEEL THEM AS VIBRATIONS.
MANY PEOPLE'S FEELINGS BECOME ONE...
...AS THE FIRST DROP OF SONG.
ALL THE VIBRATIONS COME TOGETHER...

This is what I've yearned for...
It's the perfect sound...

UTA...
THE SOUND YOU WANTED TO MAKE...
THIS IS IT.
THE SOUND OF THE HEAVENS...
CAN YOU TELL?

HEY, WAO.
DO YOU REMEMBER...
THIS SONG?
...FIRST MET...
WHEN WE...

LISTENING TO THE BOAT'S OAR...
THIS IS THAT SONG.



U
TA
WA
O

SHINDO ♬ END